DENATURED AFRICA

DANIEL W. STREETER

Spain
Str. of Gibraltar
Algiers
Tunis
Madeira
Bound in Morocco by Abdul Karim Local color by Edith Wharton
Fez
Atlas Mts
La Garden of Allah Robert Hichens
Teneriffe
Canaries
N
NW
NE
W
E
SW
SE
S
Sand Storm
Sahara
Sand, Sorrow & Sore Eyes
Timbuktu
Col Alex Powell's last frontier
C. Verde Is.
Pierre Lotis Playground
Liberia
Prof Garner learning Monkey talk
Equator
Ivory coast
Much silver flying fish To New York
Gulf of Guinea
Supposed Home of Tarzan
America
Pernambuco (Who cares)
River Congo Discovered by May Irwin 1907
Katanga Diamonds Gold
Very rough here
Portuguese East (Mud, Morons & Monotony)
Kalahari Desert
St. Helena
Wreck of the "Medusa"
Dolphins
Orange R.
Cape of Good Hope

20
Paris
Cairo
Suez Canal
Approximate point where the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea
Great Pyramid
King Tut's Tomb
Sphinx
Assouan Dam
Wady Halfa
Mecca. discovered by Rosita Forbes
Red Sea
Bedouins
Nubia
Khartoum
Abyssinian Mts
St. of Babel Mandeb
Gulf of Aden
Djibuti Port of Abyssinia
C. Guardafui
Italian Somali land
Nile River
L. Rudolf
Ruwenzori Mountains of the Moon
Uashin Gishia Plateau
L. Victoria Nyanza
Mt. Kenia
Equator
Hippo.
Elephant
Nairobi
Zebra
Antelope
Rhino.
Giraffe
Lions
To Java Head & The Celebes
Ft. Jesus
Mt. Kilimanjaro
Mombasa
Tilidini Harbor
L. Nyasa
Zanzibar Cloves
Zambesi R.
Victoria falls
Limpopo R.
Zimbabwe Phoenician mine
Mozambique Channel
Madagascar
Antananarivo
Mauritius
Jo'burg
Delagoa Bay
Siege of Ladysmith
Author's Sketch Map
Dotted line shows route

BY DANIEL W. STREETER

DENATURED AFRICA

CAMELS!

DENATURED AFRICA

By

DANIEL W. STREETER

Illustrated

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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by
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Made in the United States of America

To

MY WIFE

MY SON

MY GREAT AUNT

AND

MARCO POLO

THIS

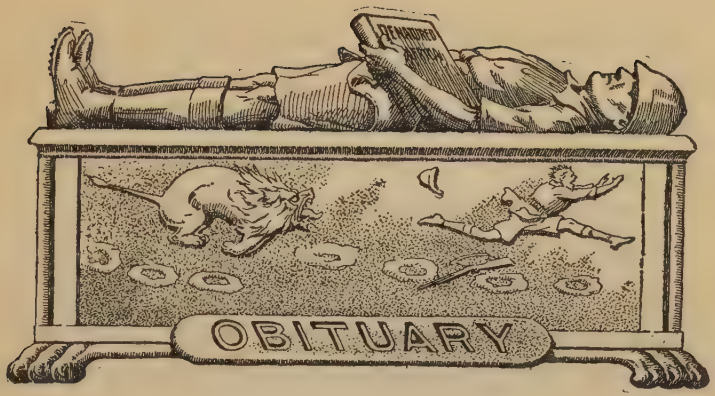
CHRONICLE

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
WITHOUT RECOURSE

"Prefaces are great wastes of time, and though they seem to proceed from modesty—they are bravery."

FRANCIS BACON.



FOR two reasons, in what follows I've omitted a great deal of detail concerning life in Darkest Africa. First, I forgot to put it in. Secondly,—but I appear to have disposed of both reasons simultaneously. This is a great relief, as the second reason has escaped my mind for the moment.

I haven't spoken of Mohammedan boys committing "hallal" on wounded animals; of the birds that passed their days jumping up and down in the grass; of the antics of the female ostrich when trying to lure the male. I've recounted no Babu stories. This is a chronicle of omissions.

OBITUARY

Several times the lion fractures the vast silences with its mighty roar. For this, and a number of other things, I must apologize. But they all happened to occur at that particular point in the narrative, and it was impossible to leave them out.

Africa has been seen through thousands of eyes. Why do people go? How do they go? What do they see? How do they react to it all? I haven't the remotest idea, except as applied to myself. This is clearly revealed in the curdled mass of gelatinous obscurity that follows.

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DENATURED AFRICA

I

WHY?

WHY?

I

MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL! There it lay in the sunset, opalescent, dripping with Romance; while the town, flat and inert, reposed drowsily on its island of coral. Our anchor splashed in the shadow of the ancient Portuguese Fort . . . it was a purple shadow cast by crumbly weather-beaten battlements. Doubtless it was known as Fort Jesus. All antique Portuguese Forts are—and this one looked very antique.

Fascinated, we leaned on the rail of the bridge-deck and gazed landward, but it was clear that we did not see eye for eye. "Africa!" I exclaimed with considerable enthusiasm. "It's marvelous!" But my son's only comment was, "It's a mangy looking place. There's nothing to shoot around that dump."

He entirely ignored the fact that our anchor had plunged into a purple shadow cast by ravelins, bastions and crenellated walls. The effects of much travel were beginning to show on both of us.

I told him so.

He answered, with a gesture expressive of complete weariness: "Did we come all this way to shoot purple shadows? Or did we?"

I let the matter drop.

There were palm trees on the sky line, rooted into a white beach that swung out to sea like a crooked finger. They thrust tousled heads into a sky full of deep plutonic reds casting shadows strange and melancholy. The twilight faded. A vague suggestion of savagery and sinister cruelty hovered in the air. It was as though a thinly veiled brutality struggled to express itself. The warm richness of the evening sky was but a gaudily painted disguise. There was no question about it—this was Africa.

An Englishman standing next us confirmed our latitude and longitude even more definitely. Leaning toward me in the attitude of one requesting the most delicate confidence, he enquired abruptly: "Do you—ah—smell anything?"

With distended nostrils I proceeded to draw off large samples of the soft evening air. He regarded me with feline intentness.

"It's the tropics—ah—," he volunteered, after allowing me but a brief interval of inhalations. "They have an odor all their own. Everybody says so." Then he knocked out his pipe and left us.

"Received and filed—one odor of the tropics," I started to call after him, but my voice trailed away. Strange misgivings about the whole adventure began to shake my confidence. It had been so loosely conceived, so rashly carried out.

This was Mozambique. It was a baffling introduction.

Half an hour later, my son and I donned our full tropical regimentals for the first time—and almost abandoned the expedition. Ever since we left Madeira, they had swayed gently back and forth on the clothes hooks in our cabins, working their spell on us. There was no gainsaying it—they were rakish garments.

Until now, however, it had never seemed quite tropical enough to venture out in them. But here the sunsets were sanguinary and the tropics "had

an odor all their own." It was more than enough. So we slipped everything on, and took ten grains of quinine apiece to throw us into the spirit of the thing.

Starting from the head and working downwards with a modern disregard for modesty, we had on "sun-helmets"—though the sun had set; flannel shirts with "spine-pads" attached, to keep our spines from melting; khaki military jackets mostly pockets; "shorts" very Boy Scoutish, that were noticeably too long; Fox's patented spiral puttees—guaranteed not to slip regardless of the physique; and hob-nailed boots. Around our waists were carelessly girdled our empty cartridge belts. I don't know how I looked, I felt completely diabolical.

Mozambique's only object of interest, we were informed, was the Fort brought over laboriously stone by stone from Portugal four hundred years ago in honest Portuguese bottoms—if such things ever existed. We advanced on its hoary walls with a sort of swivel-hipped gait that seemed properly suited to our disguise.

Near its drawbridge a native woman, clad in little else but her ebony integument, leaned against

a palm tree and stared into space with a lack-luster eye. Her glance fell on us—she started visibly. She opened the cavity that sporadically served her as a mouth. Most of the ivory in Africa flashed into sight. "The hag's got lips like a pair of balloon tires," my son remarked scornfully. We drew nearer. Her cheery smile grew—and grew. It developed into a howl of laughter. We came abreast of her. It lost itself in wild, strangling peals—horrible to listen to.

It was the most annoying moment of my life. Our first attempt at exploring—and Africa was laughing at us! The glance we shot at her was double barrelled and charged with unspeakable venom. We left her at the foot of the palm tree, a heap of shuddering mirth.

The fort was not a disappointment. Like every other Portuguese fort brought from Portugal, stone by stone, four hundred years ago—it was full of filth, pigs and chickens. A handful of native prisoners were lodged within. Behind a barbed-wire entanglement, they were permitted to air themselves.

Close to this barrier sat an old hag-woman;—a black Witch of Endor—gibbering to herself. I

enquired of the Portuguese young man who had moved, seconded and made the motion unanimous that he was our guide, why the harmless old crone was in the lock-up.

"She keela da husband," he replied.

"My, my, such a kind appearing old lady too. Husband very bad man?" I remarked interrogatively.

"No," he answered, shaking his head sadly. "All he mak was try keela her first."

"Perfect domestic felicity," I suggested. "How long is she in for?"

"Two weeka."

"For murder she only gets two weeks in prison?"

"Yes. She getta two weeka prison—then she getta hung."

At precisely this point the old hag came up to the wire and spat on me. It seemed to give her great satisfaction, for she did it twice. I object to being spat on even once. It gives me an inferiority complex. The act may have been full of atmosphere, but it seemed unfriendly. Again it was our infernal clothes. The old lady referred to them specifically, using very Biblical language. She thought we were English. To an American this is

always flattering and to some extent removed the sting from her curses, but a morbid dislike for the place possessed us. Our one idea was to reach the ship's boat—the steamer—a dinner coat. We were through with tropical togs.

To get out of this inferno we had to pass a large doorless barrack room filled with lolling Portuguese soldiers. They weren't just greasy looking—they looked as though their veins were full of oleomargarine. We slunk by this den. At once their conversation ceased and they, too, burst into loud fits of blubbery laughter. One of them found us so comical, he went over backward in his chair. This was the only point scored by us in the whole game.

We broke into a run for the mole. The black hull of the ship loomed above us, a sanctuary of boiler plate. We were climbing its friendly gangway. As we reached the top, our English friend, who could tell his geographical position by his nose was leaning over the rail. He called out cheerily:

"Hello! Hello! Been ashore?"

"No!" I barked. "We've been on a sightseeing trip through a lunatic asylum. We've been laughed at—sworn at—spit at and, as though that wasn't

enough, forty armed men who hadn't shaved for eight days tried to kiss us. If this is Africa, I am a sedentary book-worm and the British India Steamship and Navigation Company can't waft me home too quickly!"

"My word!" he murmured. . . .

"Yes, home," I mumbled. "Why did I ever leave it . . . ," which reminds me that this Expedition is nine thousand miles ahead of its equipment . . . and that's too far for any explorer to be in advance of his permanganate crystals and quinine.

II

"START with a bang if you're telling a story," one whom I had always considered reliable advised me.

So this chronicle originally began after the manner of Fenimore Cooper with the crack of a rifle and the death of a bull elephant. But the explosion of the rifle unnerved me, and the dead elephant developed into a frightful mess. I was wading knee deep in blood before I'd a chance to even slip my galoshes on. My first page looked like an abattoir. As a result, I was forced, at great personal inconvenience, to drag the body back to Chapter Nineteen. There the muss is no less colossal, but it lies deeply buried.

I complained to my authority.

"That's the wrong kind of a bang," he answered, and turned his back on me.

Thereupon I determined to go my own way

though it lead to chaos. This explains the first chapter. Something in the nature of an explanation—or even an apology, is the least I can offer.

With your permission, then, it is a beautiful spring day in Buffalo, New York. It would probably be just as fine a day without your permission, but having violently jerked you all the way back from Mozambique Channel to Buffalo, New York, you are entitled to some courtesy.

Spring in Buffalo is not to be taken lightly, however. To be sure, we cannot boast of climbing wisteria, nor are we awakened of a morning by the warbling of the mocking bird. Even the Hibiscus flower is unknown to us. We may not brag of these things, yet we have a couple of good hardware stores and a very large grain elevator. Also, a certain delicate greenness creeps over the land, betraying one's fancy into strange flights. The pulses leap; far horizons beckon—and there you are. The first thing you know you find yourself in Buenos Aires or Vladivostok.

Spring was responsible for luring us to Africa. There is no other rational explanation. My son might have suggested it, but it was Spring with its delicate greens which performed the ultimate "ho-

kus-pokus." The idea went through a short period of incubation, then broke out like a rash. I was more surprised than anyone. Over night we became swash-bucklers. One evening we went to bed normal citizens, next morning we came down to breakfast and swash-buckled. Spring did it.

When our blood cooled down a trifle, we took an inventory of our equipment, both mental and physical. My proposed companion insisted he was nearer fourteen years old than thirteen, while I insisted I was not yet forty. Our motives, we discovered, were identical—we sought adventure. This was the sum total of our qualifications. We seemed to have a common denominator, however, and plenty of vagueness to divide it into, so the matter was settled. At once, amazing things began to happen. A fantastic unreality immediately invaded our lives.

For one who was accustomed to lie awake one night because cotton had gone down and the next because it had gone up, it was a state of affairs difficult to comprehend. Again, I had led a regular life for years. It was part of my fixed routine to be always rushing somewhere, generally in a panic over something. I was never quite clear as to where I was rushing, or what the panic was over, but I

was regular about it. It took me a long time to live down my regular habits.

Under such conditions, the full realization that we were actually going to Africa at length permeated my senses. My first reaction was one of exultation. I was going to be free—free to go where I willed; to seek adventure; to live. At once I withdrew to the garage—the scene of all my temperamental outbreaks—and exulted. My jailors—Routine and Fixed Habits—had been slain. I uttered a sound such as I conceive Tarzan of the Apes might have voiced after he had strangled his worst enemy. But, beyond the fact that an Italian, who was fishing in a nearby ash can, raised his head for a moment, it was lost to the world.

Then came the inevitable reaction, equal and opposite in direction. My heart turned to lead in my chest. "My business," I reflected in a panic, "the child of my brain! It will disintegrate into cosmic dust!"

It might as well be recorded at once that it didn't. It throve. My desk was used as a sort of labyrinth in which to lose undesired mail, and many long needed reforms were effected.

It seemed a positive duty now to look up this

place—Africa. So, one day, we spread out the maps. There were political maps, topographical maps, climatic maps and just plain, useless maps. We picked out one that was beautifully colored. In certain sections it looked as if it had the measles.

But it was unconvincing, it all seemed so remote and unreal. Rivers like the Limpopo and Zambesi, the map said they were there—but we found it hard to believe. We were willing to concede the Hudson or the Mississippi—the Limpopo, no. Then towns like Lourenço Marques, Chai Chai, Chinde, Mozambique. They were merely musical words.

Finally it was revealed to us that Africa contained eleven million square miles, and one hundred and eighty million people. In area, it was over three times as big as the United States. It was much too big to understand, our brains began to reel, so we put away the map with the hope that when we struck the jungle at Capetown we might be met by some Hottentots as well as the representative of Thomas Cook & Son.

This terminated our preliminary African studies.

My friends now divided themselves into two classes: those who thought I was crazy and said so; and those who only thought I was crazy. On the

other hand, by many, I was already regarded as an African authority. Daily they presented carefully considered questions for my solution:—"What was Mrs. Grey's Letchwe?"—"Would a lion eat only freshly killed meat?"—"Did an elephant lie down when it went to sleep?" They hung on my answers as though I was an oracle. I did the best I could—which was rotten.

Again, an entirely new group of human beings entered my life. It consisted of those who labored with suppressed desires,—and unsuspected Wanderlusts. I began to feel quite Freudian as I discussed a wide range of subjects that I did not understand with my new friends.

One balmy day, an orderly businessman, with no visible signs of bloodthirsty tendencies, drew me aside and whispered in my ear: "I'd like to lend you my elephant gun. It's a little old-fashioned—a double five hundred—for black powder—but might be useful."

"I don't get you," I said.

"Elephant gun—take it," he went on. "I was all set to go to Africa myself once, but my wife had a baby. It broke up the trip."

"How very inconsiderate of her," was all I could

say. "That musket is a hoodoo however. If you don't mind, I'd rather not borrow it."

And now I began to avoid our Curate, for there was a look in his eye that led me to suspect him of a secret desire to become the Chaplin (spiritual—not Charlie) of our little Expedition.

This all sounds unreal, I am well aware of that, but it happened exactly as set down, and proved to be important, for it brought a new problem into our lives. What should one take to Africa? We felt we ought to take something beside a few vague yearnings. But what? The question was saturated with nitro-glycerine.

Then, in New York, I met a fellow who had actually been to Africa once in the flesh. "What does one take?" I asked him.

"If you have your golf sticks and tennis racket," he answered, "you needn't worry; and for clothes, your dinner coat will see you through."

"But I'm going Big Game Hunting," I explained patiently, "and while I do play a sort of hybrid golf and something that might be termed a bastard tennis, I always do it at my Country Club."

"You must play golf and tennis with the fellows down there," he continued. "They like it—and if

they win enough from you, they'll see that you get some good hunting."

Here was a pretty thing! Romance with the golf clubs! Mystery with the tennis racket! Advantage, Mr. Antelope. Love forty, Mrs. Elephant! Bunk!

Shortly after this, I met a grizzled veteran not a day less than seventy years old. The dinner coat question was now causing me sleepless nights. I asked him if he thought I would need it. I asked everyone.

"Dinner coat, hell!" he snorted. "I've travelled all the way from Khartoum to Mombasa and most of the time I didn't wear anything." He left me champing his teeth.

Worry over this simple matter was beginning to undermine my health. The whole adventure might have been entitled "Much Ado About a Dinner Coat." Was the trip worth the worry? Some explorers seemed to run about in evening clothes, with arms full of tennis rackets; others, evidently, lolled about garbed in nothing but atmospheric pressure. At night, I had lurid dreams in which big game, dinner coats, baffies, and nude old men did bacchantic dances to music produced by my unfortunate

friend whose wife had a baby, whistling into the barrels of his elephant gun.

At length, and not a moment too soon, an Englishman rescued me from this state of semi-delirium. I put the dinner coat up to him. He looked into the distance like a seer and said:

"Take it—ah—. It occupies but little space; and supposing you didn't have it—ah—and were commanded to dinner at Government Housé," and he let both arms fall to his sides in a gesture pregnant with complete prostration.

"Ah! as a matter of fact," he snapped out at length, as though waking from a trance, "I'm—ah—much more interested in your battery. Who is your gun-maker?"

"To tell the truth," I replied evasively. "I've been so busy deciding what make of tennis racket I'd take, I hadn't thought of batteries yet."

He rocked back and forth on his heels for a moment. "Why in the world fate is wafting you to Africa—ah—I don't know," he remarked, "but if you are going to shoot big game—ah—have everything ship-shape or you will very likely enter the country full of hope and leave it full of holes—ah—that is, if you ever leave it. Get the best guns Lon-

don will afford, and go to a reliable Colonial Outfitter for other things. I'll give you some addresses." And the poor fellow collapsed into a chair. He said afterwards he had misjudged the period in his last sentence and run out of oxygen.

III

THE first thing I did on reaching London was to visit my gun-maker. I call him my gun-maker, but at that time he wasn't aware that he was my gun-maker. I was only dimly conscious of it myself. It must be confessed, however, that I was deeply stirred, and not a little proud, as I twisted his well polished door-knob and, assuming a careless manner, entered his "gunnery," or whatever it's called. It was a deadly looking place. The solidarity of antiquity hung in festoons from ceiling to floor. Rows of guns, well polished and orderly, bespoke a metallic ancestry stretching back to the days of bows and arrows.

"Our ancestors fought at Agincourt," they seemed to say. "Who are you?"—"What is your muzzle velocity?"

With some misgivings, I addressed a gentle looking man. He was at once suave and dignified

but appeared wan and washed out and, in addition to all this, a trifle hen-pecked. One instantly pictured him returning home of an evening to eight or nine children, who hung on his trouser legs and uttered raucous cries. As a gunsmith—a dealer in death, he was a disappointment.

"Good morning," I said, "I'm on my way to Africa. I would like something in the way of a gun, if you please." A simple request, yet uttered without conviction.

"Very good," he replied languidly, "what ballistics do you fancy?"

My reply is a secret that will die with me.

But in the end, I purchased a long, lean, murderous looking musket and enough ammunition to start a revolution. At this point, I would have been glad to let the matter drop. My son, however, labored under the conviction that it would be nothing short of suicide to enter Africa without an automatic revolver and four or five bowie knives concealed about our persons. So it was merely a matter of minutes before we found ourselves in the show-room of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. There we found no difficulty in exchanging some innocent playful looking bank notes for a sophisticated, truc-

ulent looking automatic. Now I knew I was ready to stop collecting lethal weapons.

As we were leaving the clerk remarked:

"Going away?"

"Africa," I replied carelessly.

"Have you got one of our 'four hundred and fives' for heavy game?" he queried, with something resembling a challenge in his voice.

"No, I thought I'd——"

"Of course, you know that Roosevelt swore by them?" he interrupted severely.

"Yes," I said, "but you see——"

"You don't mean to say that you were going to Africa without a 'four hundred and five'—Roosevelt's favorite gun?" His rising voice was incredulous.

"By the Bones of Saint Cuthbert! No!" I cried. "How much are they without the ballistics?" I figured the ballistics at Rigby's had cost me twenty-five pounds. "And if Roosevelt took a Steinway to Africa, let me know now while my heart is light and carefree." I began to feel like a janitor in an arsenal. My son, on the other hand, was in Paradise. The way he fingered our armament made my blood run cold.

The backbone of our equipment nightmare was broken—in fact it was a mass of splinters. To pass the time in London, I glanced through the works of several Big Game hunters, to be sure we had overlooked nothing. To my surprise, I found even they agreed on nothing with respect to African equipment. "That makes it easy," I reflected, "we won't take any." And if I had kept my head we wouldn't have.

The question of the use of quinine is a fair example. Some advised taking it daily in the tropics, their prescriptions ranging from a microscopic dose —a mere prophylactic flirtation—to a veritable tiger drench. Others laughed at it. Quinine meant nothing in their lives. They were hardy pirates of the tropics, and regarded the anopheles mosquito as a pet, rather than a pest.

When the occasion arose weeks later, we split the difference, and took five grains once a fortnight, if we remembered it. But to be on the safe side, we always slept with ten grains under our pillows.

They united, however, in strongly urging one to carry on the person, a sharp knife, a glass syringe with a long nozzle and a packet of permanganate crystals. They made a ritual of this idea. It was an

African First Aid Kit for leopard and lion scratches.

When one emerged from a petting party with one of these animals, he took the sharp knife, made a deep gash along the inevitable scratches right down to the bone, then ground up a few permanganate crystals, made a ten percent solution and shot it into the gash by means of the glass syringe with the long nozzle. It was fascinating reading and impressed us so deeply we rushed directly to Burroughs & Welcome and bought two beautiful outfits. We started carrying them in London, and never stirred without them until we reached Africa —weeks later.

But, to return to more cheerful subjects, in the case of Epsom Salts and policemen's whistles, all the authorities agreed. It was clear that every African traveler should carry a plentiful supply of both, but not entirely clear what he should do with either.

We debated this baffling question of equipment for three days, then became hysterical and, casting discretion to the winds, entered a Colonial Outfitters. It was our undoing.

"Destination, sir?" querried the engaging young man who waited on us.

"Africa," I answered.

"Doubtless you have made up a list," he said.

"I have," I replied, and handed him a blank piece of paper.

"This is as complete a list as I've ever seen," he remarked cheerfully, "but you must have overlooked say—two Roorki chairs, mosquito boots, slacks, shorts, tunics, Bedford cords, Basin-bath and stand,—I found this invaluable in Mespo, sir—, chlorodyne, emetine, dental floss, morphine and a 'house-wife'—as you probably know we were outfitters for Colonel Roosevelt and——"

"Enough!" I shouted, "if it was good enough for the Colonel, it's good enough for me." And then, just to show him I knew a thing or two about ballistics myself, I added, "And put in three thousand rounds of quinine, fifty pounds of high Velocity Epsom Salts and one-half dozen soft-nosed policemen's whistles."

The next afternoon we sailed. It was a raw, tempestuous day in late December. The early twilight fell with mountainous seas breaking over the forecastle. A stinging sleet drove into our faces as we stood on the bridge-deck peering into the gloom, but we did not feel it. We were heading South. At last we were Africa bound!

II

HOW?

HOW?

I

FOR thirty-one days the British Merchant Marine collaborated nobly in transporting us two-thirds of the way around Africa. They did not appear to consider it a matter of much moment. To us it was an epic journey. It was so long, to be sure, most of us forgot what we had started for, but that did not subtract from its homeric quality.

Madeira dropped astern; for a fortnight we were cradled on the bosom of gently heaving sapphire seas. About us glinted silvery flying fish. We became steeped in the Lotus, drugged with tropical indolence. Then, one morning at sunrise Table Mountain overshadowed us; at its foot lay Cape Town. Here we suffered a great disappointment. There were no Hottentots. There were pretty girls and a certain revolting type of American

automobile, but no Hottentots. We passed men on the street who sounded as though they were strangling to death. But we were told they were only speaking Cape Dutch. They did it every day. It ought to be made a capital offense.

Then Cape Town became a dim blot on the horizon. We weathered the Cape of Good Hope. It was an effortless weathering. We merely slipped around the coccyx of Africa like an eight cylinder eel. It seemed as though there should have been a struggle here. All the old Navigators struggled here in other days. This simple mound of granite was invariably the signal for Dutch sea-dogs, who knew no fear, to get full of schnapps as an antidote for discouragement.

We nosed our way up the East Coast, making one night stands at Port Elizabeth and East London. At Port Elizabeth there is a good museum. One could tell this at a glance—nobody ever went in it. It possessed a collection of cave drawings done by the Bushmen such an immeasurably long time ago that one look at them made me feel childish.

East London is a nice town—so much for East London.

Of Durban I would like to sing a long full-throated saga: its setting, its colorful life, its crimson flamboyant trees, its gardens, all deserve it. But, as my son was ever reminding me, we had not come half around the world to shoot at purple shadows. Here we listened to the Zulu language for the first time. If Dutch is a jargon, Zulu is a riot between the tonsils, adenoids, palate and larynx. It has three tonal qualities: clicks, clacks and gulps. Some of the noises seemed to be jerked up from the lower œsophagus, others from the pyloric regions of the abdomen. It ought to be given a place among the dead languages, and every care should be taken to keep it dead.

Now Durban lay behind us. We steamed up Delagoa Bay to pause momentarily at Lorenço Marques. The chief point of interest here was the currency. It fluctuated so rapidly that every time you changed a dollar into escudos you owed yourself money. We sat in the shade and watched it go up and down. It was the most violent kind of exercise.

Then came Mozambique.

One morning at dawn with the sea shimmering like quick silver, we approached Zanzibar. It was

a bland picture. Like a mirage it floated in the sky, a pile of flat topped houses, sprinkled with minarets, pinnacles and domes. Here and there tufted palms produced splashes of green.

Here there was a Sultan; a harem; ponderous, brass-studded Arab doors; ivory; ebony; tortoise-shell; pale, Indian gold; Arabs, whose girdles swaddled antique, sinister knives; immaculate English officers mounted on thorough-breds; houses like fortresses, on the upper floors of which dwelt Europeans or rich Mohammedans, behind cool walls two feet thick; a market place shrouded in clouds of dust; exotic fruits vended by chewers of the betel nut, who squatted on the ground encircled by a ring of carmine expectoration. With every vagrant breeze one's nose was assaulted by a fresh aroma, but over all hovered the odor of spices, for the cloves of the world come from Zanzibar.

At sundown we sailed. Again Zanzibar dissolved into serried rows of flat-topped houses, sprinkled with minarets and domes, but now it floated on an opalescent sea. It did a prismatic fade-out and was gone.

The ship slept, its motley cargo for the moment sunk in a deep unconsciousness. Without, in the

half-light cast by luminous stars, one was caressed by gentle breezes. Soft Borean mischiefs and wanton little zephyrs that knew no sense of modesty conspired to lure one's fancy with strange flights. A throbbing, palpitating stillness lay over the sea; a silence that caused one's nerves to tingle. It was as though great drums, beaten far in the distance, produced sounds elusive and disturbing. Knife like, the prow of the vessel cleaved the world into two phosphorescent halves that fell away from our dark bulk with liquid gurglings and whisperings. Persistent, liturgical cadences arose from our cut water. The Indian Ocean was murmuring its Pater Nosters. For an instant our glowing wake lingered and was gone, absorbed by the velvety blackness from which it sprang.

In the morning we were to reach Mombasa.

III

WHAT?

WHAT?

I

THROUGH an entrance like the neck of a vinegar cruet, we entered Kilidini Harbor. Fantastic coral formations lined the shore. Curious trees with unruly branches and enormous trunks sprawled about.

All was bustle and confusion. But the First Officer found time, as he rushed past, to warble hoarsely: "Baobab trees!" and wave an arm toward the shore. We were glad to know this and thanked him, but he had gone.

A fellow traveler named Sackville approached: "Nobody knows how old they grow," he murmured.

"Who?" I enquired.

"The Baobabs," he replied pityingly. "Those trees were probably lusty saplings when Cleopatra was a stripling." It sounded immoral.

I glanced into the Who's Who and What's What

of Africa—the South African Year Book. "The Baobabs of Mombasa belong to the Bombacaceous family," was written there in so many words. My inclination was to throw the book overboard. There seemed no escape from these snobbish sounding, outlandish chunks of wood. I began to long for the sight of a common hickory or worm-eaten cherry tree.

The sight of my son emerging from the companion-way, arms full of bundles, brought me back to normal. "Maybe we'll get some shooting this aft," he remarked hopefully.

"Maybe," I replied not quite so hopefully. "It's about time."

Our anchor plunged into deep, land-locked waters. The voyage was over. Eight thousand seven hundred and seventy-one miles from Southampton! Back by Suez another six thousand four hundred and twelve miles! A round trip of fifteen thousand one hundred and eighty-three miles! Three-fifths of the distance around the earth! Twice the diameter! Sackville expressed it very well. He said, "It's a long way."

Rising to the sky line before us, faintly green, almost demure looking, lay an inviting landscape.

The land where life was full of color! Freedom! Mystery! Of course, we were deeply stirred, as who wouldn't have been. It seemed as though this inscrutable mainland demanded an epic greeting or lyrical rhapsody to say the least—something cryptic and deep.

My English friend of the sensitive nostrils appeared to feel the same way about it. He devoured the green landscape with a non-stop gaze. Though his face was expressionless, it was plain that he was powerfully moved. Several times he opened his mouth as though to speak, but nothing came out. He closed it again. I racked my brains for some little thought, fecund with feeling, that might express our deep emotion jointly. But he beat me to it in the end.

"Well! Well! Well!" he said cheerily. "Here we are," and pointed to the North. For a moment he acted as though he was trying to recover something he had accidentally swallowed, then remarked again, "Yes! Here we are!"

There was no answer. He was absolutely right. "Well, yes," I admitted. "Here we are," and pointed to the South. Then we both went down to collect the rest of our baggage.

Now a rather singular thing happened. For years we had cherished the idea that when one landed in Darkest Africa the event was distinctly dramatic. We had always visualized the landing as accomplished in a whale-boat stroked by a crew of ruffians, tattoed with bold, freehand designs, and gorilla-like chests, upholstered with impenetrable jungles of hair. In my vision, one stood with foot on the gunwale ready to leap, and waved aloft a brightly polished claymore. It was a picture that always arose in our minds when Africa was mentioned. It concluded with the traveler leaping ashore on to a white, sandy beach and posing while a native crawled up on his (the native's) stomach and kissed his (the traveler's) foot.

That was my vision. As a matter of fact, we were rowed ashore in a wherry held together by the pressure of the water. Its perfume was decomposed fish; its motive power, a negro dressed in the ruins of a frock coat and the brim of a straw hat —who had an aroma of a definitely personal character. Sackville, who had a genius for such things, summed it up concisely: "He smells strongly," he said. We were forked on to a slivery dock and driven into a long tin building—the Custom House.

Nobody offered to kiss us. In fact, nobody paid any attention to us.

The sun beat down on the tin roof. The interior of the building was like a fireless cooker. In a frenzy, people ordinarily modest and refined, rushed about trying to persuade Custom Officials, who knew no sense of modesty, to finger articles of the most private nature. We forgot the heat and regarded our baggage with eyes of amazement.

All the hand-picked equipment we had personally conducted these thousands of miles, now that it lay exposed to the critical eye of the tropics, looked idiotic. It was an unrelated batch of odds and ends. They didn't mean anything. The Roorki chairs looked knock-kneed—as though a couple of mastodons had sat on them. The Epsom Salts, that had appeared so jocund and adventurous in London, now seemed flat and amateurish. And there was so much! It was one of the few things the authorities had agreed on, so we may have over done it! When we saw the policemen's whistles, we turned away our heads with a low moan. If it was our intention to convert all the natives from Jinja to Ujiji into

carriage starters, we wouldn't have needed any more.

There were two hotels. We went to one of them. We couldn't go to both, but it would have been better if we could, for, when we decided on one, people tried to talk us out of it and into the other. Later we came to understand that this was merely the perversity of the great open spaces, where the days are long and there are no six-party telephone lines to offer relaxation. If you went to the Norfolk at Nairobi, you should have gone to the New Stanley. If you shot a Winchie 405, you should be shooting a Jefferies 404. If you were about to start for the Lorian Swamp, you were a foofoo; the Loita Plains was the place to go.

It was hot. At noon our thermometer registered one hundred and ten degrees. Then we knew it was hot. Previously it had all been guess work. Three days later we got our pores under control. After that we never let them get a look at a thermometer again.

After lunch at the hotel everyone slept—"eye-shut" it was called. It was only necessary for some to shift their positions slightly and relax. It seemed our duty to read up on the history of the

Island. We went to our room and lay down. It was not the kind of reading one cared to undertake standing.

We were on the coral Island of Kisiwa Mvita, meaning Island of War—so the book said. It was three miles long and two broad—one was sure to be in the middle of any excitement. I made up my mind to remember those figures; they might prove useful one day. Kilidini Harbor, meaning "deep place," was at one extremity, and Mombasa Harbor at the other. Port Tudor nestled in the rear. It was a sad looking Island, but age will tell, and it was very old. In 1593 the Portuguese built the Fort out of red stone—Fort Jesus. In 1631 the Sultan of Mombasa massacred the entire Portuguese population. He was annoyed with them over something. Four years later the Portuguese landed and massacred the Sultan. Tit for tat! Thirty years later the Arabs besieged Fort Jesus —what they could see in it nobody has ever been able to discover. But they hung around for two years. Then it fell. It was exhausted. With a delicate appreciation of their social obligations, they entered and massacred the remains of all the previous massacres. It was a third rate program

however. There were only eleven men, two women and a goat left. Two days later, a Portuguese fleet arrived from Goa to relieve the Fort. It was beyond relief. Almost beyond repair! All that was left were the hocks and short-ribs of the goat. They sailed away. Then the Sultan of Zanzibar became angry over something, and fricasseed the entire population of the Island. It was a brand new population too. It looked as though the whole thing was going to start all over again.

I went to sleep.

When I awoke the book was on the floor. I let it stay there. I was more interested in a lizard that had just emerged from a crack in the ceiling. He was being chased by two other lizards. Even the lizards appeared warlike on this Island.

The siesta was over. I was exhausted. We decided to see what the town could afford. The train for Nairobi did not leave until the next morning. It was obvious we might as well know the worst at once. A rickshaw was summoned. When the boy was made to understand that we were members of the American Geographical Society, and wanted to see everything, he was delighted. As he stood there in the shafts, it would have seemed the most

natural thing in the world if he had sprung his tail over the dash and whinnied. Instead of this, he gave two or three monkey jumps straight up and down, and was off like a rabbit. It was only then we discovered the rickshaw had egg-shaped wheels. Euclid would have called them oblate spheroids, but they were egg-shaped. As a matter of fact, although somewhat undignified, it was a pleasant motion.

A long, white road divided the Island; a hot, white road kept well sprinkled by the perspiration of half-naked negroes, who, from dawn to dark, hauled merchandise over its shimmering surface on four-wheeled trucks. Their cracked chanting was ever in the air. The man who steered uttered a guttural statement, convincing and decisive. From the rear the straining boys answered with panting conviction. Chanty men of the tropics. Back and forth these monotonous sounds were tossed, as from one end of the Island to the other the creaking freight of the Port took its way. Toward the sea was the Golf Club, Cricket Pitch, Country Club and such unromantic things. Neat villas regarded a well-controlled landscape with smug satisfaction. It was disgusting. We came here to see

life in the raw, and it was being served up with parsley.

We passed the blunt Official Buildings of the English, in which soldier-men shot their cuffs; Judges perspired under horse-hair wigs; Bankers rocked idly in swivel chairs and juggled equities. Then the Fort, with beckoning vistas of blue sea and harbor where, tugging at plaited grass anchor ropes, rode native dhows—primitive Arab vessels in which the lean brown men have ventured remote seas since time was. Not to mention them would be decidedly unorthodox—almost as bad as ignoring the Baobabs. We passed the Clubs, and on into the Portuguese section of the town. Here thick walls served as a shield, not only from the assagais of the natives but the javelins of the sun. A thing called Vasco da Gama's Column stood straight up in the air like a piece of French pastry. It had been standing there like a piece of French pastry four hundred years. Natives have come to regard it more or less as a permanent fixture. He left a well, too, in his hurry to push on into other unknown regions.

Now came the Ivory Custom House, through the doors of which much of the world's ivory passes,

Turbulent meeting of the "Boost Mombasa" Society.

and where, in the dim light, still crusted with blood and loam, lay tusks hacked from the jaws of old bull elephants killed but yesterday.

The commercial section of the town followed. Bales, bundles and boxes of coffee, sisal, ceara rubber and antique smells appeared to constitute the commerce of the country.

We entered narrow, tortuous streets, mazelike and filthy. This section of the town was undefiled by any City Planning Association or "Mop-up-Mombasa Society." It was like a lunatic's dream of Heaven.

Our rickshaw would not pass through some of the streets. The hubs caught in the doorways. Dejected looking dwellings, built of wattles and mud, degenerated into structures reared of odds and ends—mostly odds. The inhabitants of these dens were as unharmonious in appearance as their dwellings. This was the native quarter. You could have addressed mail to any street in this section by specifying its own particular odor on the envelope:— "Abdallah, Number 23, on the street that smells like fish," or "goat" or "rancid fruit." It would have been impossible for the letter to go astray.

Carpenters, goldsmiths, metal workers, tailors, labored in open stalls. The only touch of modernity were the Singer Sewing Machines in the tailor shops. They seemed an almost sacrilegious intrusion, for otherwise life flowed on with the simplicity of Biblical times. The more flies that gathered about a given shop, the more people patronized it. It was a positive sign that something had slipped badly and was about to be disposed of at a sacrifice. In the end somebody might even have to be paid to carry it away.

Under a huge tree, festooned with moss, was an open air blacksmith shop. It was not a chestnut tree, but it was the "village smithy" nevertheless. The smith was a large buck negro. His arms were groined to his shoulders with muscles like cantaloupes. "That is the original 'village blacksmith,'" I remarked to my son, distinctly accentuating the world black. I was taking no chances.

He regarded me coldly: "What does he do?" he asked. I determined to look up our genealogy on both sides of the family at the first opportunity.

There was a fish market, full of screaming natives, where large blocks of ptomaine were openly

dealt in over the counter. Here, too, was the lumber-yard and saw-mill. Upon the receipt of an order for a plank, they first gave the manager a whiff of smelling salts, then two silent Indians spent the day sawing it by hand from virgin timber.

The sun blazed down. An occasional pack train of donkeys, staggering under burdens of coral blocks, crowded us to the walls.

Congregated on every refuse pile was a synod of pigs, chickens, goats and small black infants with enormous bellies and moist, unpleasant noses. On the friendliest terms, they rummaged for choice morsels. Life was simple here. The sun blazed down.

Plumbing was unknown. If one craved water, he went and got it from a well in two five-gallon Standard oil tins, slung from either end of a long pole. We passed a humpback lugging water. He was using his lump to balance the pole on. His brother water-carriers regarded him with unconcealed envy.

There were numerous mosques. None pretentious, many merely batty ruins. One was roofed over with flattened out Standard oil tins. While, as tabernacles, they were morbid looking piles, they

cast a most satisfactory shadow; and there the faithful slept—in deep, deathlike slumber.

This was Mombasa. The sun blazed down. Our heads swam. We turned into a broad thoroughfare, wide and busy. Evidently the native Champs Elysées. Here was a mingling of many races: Arabs, Indians, Goanese, Kikuyus, Kavirondos; a mosaic of perspiring humanity. With difficulty, the rickshaw passed through the mob. To open a passage our boy would beat on the shafts with an old dinner bell and utter imperious cries.

A Kikuyu girl stood in our path. From shoulder to knee she was covered with a greasy skin. Four or five loops of brass wire circled her neck. The lobes of her ears were punctured and stretched with grooved circles of wood, the size of saucers. From three holes in the top of each ear, slender wooden plugs sprouted. Around her biceps, and just below each knee, about four inches of heavy brass wire was tightly twisted. Her feet were bare and hornlike.

On her head was balanced a heavily laden basket. She seemed full of supercilious confidence. Though her burden obliged her to hold her head straight to the front, nothing escaped her beady

eyes as they rolled restlessly from side to side. We were almost on top of her. The boy whacked his bell, and uttered a strident cry. Without concern she continued on. As she walked her hips swayed gracefully. Now, with a yelp of rage, the boy gave her a violent shove in the small of the back. The basket snapped from her head and crashed to earth. There was the jingle of breaking glass. Soft tropical fruit, some cereal and a quart of brown honey lay jumbled in the dust of the road. It was a mess. The week's marketing had been annihilated. She stood there regarding it, horror in her eyes, nostrils quivering. A circle of excited natives gathered. I began to feel an aversion for the neighborhood. Fortunately, our boy was seized with an identical feeling. Just as a volley of indignant glances were being hurled in our direction, he gave a sneering exclamation as though saying: "The next time you'll move when you hear me coming," and stepped on the gas. In no time we were lost in the crowd. The picture of the girl standing over the annihilation of her worldy goods, with agony in her eyes, vanished.

The sun blazed down. It had been more or less of a disappointing day, full of elements of unreal-

ity. We began to think of certain spots in the Adirondacks that we knew of. But that night a large tropical moon rose and mellowed the world. Under its spell the harshness and filth vanished. The hard lines became vague and silvery.

We sat on a terrace and listened to strange stories. On the wall nearby several lizards clung. But now they were quiescent, motionless as bits of bronze.

A cool breeze was blowing.

II

CURIOUSLY enough Sackville was to share our compartment on the train to Nairobi. This was a matter of much satisfaction to us. At once we were relieved of the necessity of thumbing a guide-book. His stock of information was copious. He was fluently inaccurate—but this was a small matter, the language was colorful and vivid.

We approached this journey on the Uganda Railway with much curiosity. It is referred to as the strangest railroad journey in the world. Many people say so. Roosevelt called it "a railroad through the Pleistocene"—a lot to call any railroad. We were about to penetrate "behind the beyond." Our hearts beat high, our blood surged. A moist tropical perspiration suffused us.

On the way to the station we stopped at the Transport Department to look at two lions, fresh from the interior, on their way to the London Zoo

to gladden the eyes of nurse maids and infants. They were tremendous—so much larger than they ought to have been; black maned and burly, tough and battle-scarred. Zoo lions must shrink in captivity like woolens after rain. These had clearly never been rained on. They paced up and down the flimsy cage in a savage humor. At regular intervals one placed a paw, the size of a soup plate, against the slats and sprung them, whale bone fashion. Their eyes were like molten gold, flecked with jade, their stare baleful and insolent.

"Ain't they the little dears, now," a sergeant remarked. "Sore because their dinner's late. Then sore some more 'cause there ain't enough. Sore—sore all the time. Somebody in London decides lions should eat twelve pounds of meat a day. So that's what lions eat. They never asks the lions. They decides it at the Foreign Office. Now lions has got to eat twelve pounds of meat a day, no matter if it kills 'em. But it don't. They could eat thirty pounds, and die of old age. But they can't. It's in the regulations they gets twelve pounds."

A negro approached with a couple of slabs of fly blown flesh. The cage began to rock and jump about, as though on the verge of disintegration.

"Our train leaves at five o'clock," I remarked.

"Quite," said Sackville, "maybe we'd better be toddling." We left the sergeant muttering something about—"Ain't he a pretty pussy now? There's his twelve pound steak from his dear friend in the Foreign Office—I hope he jolly well chokes." Who was to be thus blighted was not clear. Probably all concerned. The sight of these lions cast a pall over me. They appeared so huge and invincible. Their muscles rippled beneath their sleek skins so dreadfully. Their eyes were so full of hate. They could almost look me down. Not far away to the North, their brothers and sisters were running about with nothing on their minds—nothing, that is, but battle, murder and sudden death. For the second time my mind flashed back to my native City, and that security for which it was a symbol.

We arrived at the Terminal of the Uganda Railroad an hour and a half before train time. Even at this early hour it seemed as if half the population of Mombasa was on hand to witness the excitement. One could check them all off—the Whites, Indians, Arabs, Goanese, Negroid races, and that small handful of human mongrels described by Sackville as "one-half Arab and the other half missing."

It was a motley and enthusiastic gathering. Some ladies were dressed in filmy white things—others wore greasy skins. There were ear lobes plugged—and others pink, white and unplugged; heads bobbed—and heads shaved to resemble ebony billiard balls. All were vociferous. An atmosphere of nervous haste pervaded the air. It was the Grand Central Terminal, the Charing Cross Station, the Gare de Lyon of British East Africa.

Our baggage was run over scales, and charged for by the pound. From this moment it took on a new importance in our eyes, and was referred to as "kag" or "dunnage."

We examined the train that was to take us "beyond the behind" as eagerly as if it was to take us to Mars. The engine burned wood. It burned holes, too, we discovered next morning when we looked at our bed rolls. It proved itself a thirty-second degree spark-belcher. Night and day they swarmed through the open windows like wasps, until our "kag" looked as though it had the small-pox. Also it was a Volstead engine. Water went through it so fast that it was always raining anywhere back of the "cow-catcher"—more appropriately referred to as "rhino-tosser."

Next the engine came small box cars, full of hard, wooden benches for the Negroid races. Then similar cars, but with seats probably made out of softer wood, served the higher grade races, such as the Indians, Goanese and Mulligatawny. Negroids were not permitted in Goanese cars. I presume Thyroids were not allowed to ride at all. The rules were simple:—all assagais, harpoons, dirks and can openers had to be checked in the luggage van. No strangling with the bare hands was allowed between stations. Dead bodies could not be thrown on the right of way. It was sound railroading. The comfort of the traveling public was shielded in every way.

First and second class Nordic compartment cars followed. They were both the same. Everyone traveled second class, except visiting Explorers like ourselves. No service was supplied. One slept in his own bed roll, if he wasn't too lazy to unroll it. Food was available at various stations.

The engine uncorked a falsetto whistle—just the kind you would expect from a wood burner. The natives, in their box cars, chattered like monkeys. Good-byes were waved. We glided out of the station.

We were off! I'll never know a thrill like that again. From the windows of a railway carriage we were about to view life as it existed twenty-five thousand years ago—that is, as everybody suspects it existed twenty-five thousand years ago. We rumbled over the long iron bridge connecting the Island of War with the mainland, and without more ado began our climb to the highlands of the interior. The vegetation was tropical and novel—to our wide eyes, at any rate. Groves of cocoa-nut palms, mangoes, bananas and popoyas in languorous confusion trenched upon the right of way, with a brazen disregard for the regulations. Then came plantations of ceara rubber and cocoa palms. A neat mile-post marked off the end of each mile. If one spoke of a definite point along the line, he indicated it by the nearest mile-post. Nairobi was mile 330, or "some lions had just been seen at mile 298."

Between Mombasa and Nairobi we made thirteen stops, each an isolated pin point entirely absorbed in its own particular drama, or comedy. At mile 16, we had achieved an altitude of five hundred and thirty feet, but in the process had wheezed ourselves out of water, so paused at Mazeras. Here were real live Africans selling fruit, but while

they were satisfactorily inky and grotesque, one secretly felt something was lacking. They showed unmistakable traces of the metropolitan influence of Mombasa. Here, too, was a sprinkling of "askaris,"—the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police of the Equator. Of course they differed slightly; they were unmounted, except on bare feet with overhanging heels, and as large as canoes—in that respect they were well mounted. Their egg shaped skulls were housed under red fezzes. Khaki tunics and shorts shielded their lean trunks from the sun, while frazzled blue puttees were twined about their rickety shins. They were big fellows though, and stout-hearted preservers of order—hearts of oak, with feet of horn. That's all anybody could ask. The book said we were still in the unhealthy coastal region. But this was hard to understand, for Mombasa, at sea level, was quoted as quite healthy by those in the real estate business. We resumed our journey.

Twilight was approaching. High lights faded. The engine coughed out sparks that now appeared as swarming fire-flies. Then the sun set and a full moon rose, simultaneously. There was no fuss or furor. One slipped down and the other slipped up

—that was all. It was as though some supernatural agency amused itself juggling immeasurable globes of fire.

As the sun's last rays pierced the dust-ladened atmosphere of the horizon, colors soft and enchanting spread over the West, lingered for a moment, faded to a dusky rose, as though the sky was dyed with rhodamine—and vanished. For an instant the land was lonely, still, shadowy; then the luminous, yellow effulgence of the full moon shone forth bringing elevations and depressions into vague relief. On the edge of the world it hung, a hypnotic yellow disc.

"It's nothing but a great hunk of cheese!" murmured Sackville. Then he began to whistle softly. He did not want it to appear that the spell of the evening had entered into him.

Air brakes ground against wheels. The train came to a stop. In the soft light we seemed to be in the middle of nowhere, though the book said that this was Samburu. We were now a thousand feet above the Indian Ocean—and at mile 44. A hose was run into the vitals of the engine. "Forty minutes would be allowed for dinner," we were notified. At a long table, lighted by an oil lamp, we

manhandled a relish, soup, fish, roast and dessert. Then came a savory and coffee, and a feeling of considerable pressure around the diaphragm.

As dessert appeared, the Guard blew his whistle. Time was up. Nobody moved. The Guard stuck his head through the door, and split the air with a blast. Nobody stirred. "Don't pay any attention to him," said Sackville, and helped himself to more dessert. "Look as though you didn't know him," said the fellow on the other side of me, and ordered another cup of coffee. The Guard left us, and paced up and down the platform in gloomy silence. Each time he passed the window, he stopped and glared at us in a horrid way. Nobody took any notice of him. At length he gave this up, and sulked in the shadows. Thirty minutes later, after the last possible excuse for lingering had been removed, we rose in a body and boarded the train. For us, Time did not exist. Africa was receiving us into her dark bosom.

We now crossed a "waterless, scrubby country, sparsely inhabited." Suddenly, in the middle of it, the train stopped. "A-ah!" exclaimed my son. "Maybe we've run into a herd of elephants!" We went forward. There the Indian engineer was tell-

ing the Guard, in furious accents, that he would not budge another foot until the "Shenzi" in the next car stopped throwing empty bottles into the brakes. A "Shenzi," I was informed, was the lowest imaginable type of savage. With a sigh, that grew to a cry of anguish, the Guard entered the box car of the natives. There were a few squeals and smothered twitterings, then silence. He emerged red in face and with the glitter of perspiration on his forehead.

"What did you do?" I asked him.

"Promised them 'Askaris' at McKinnon Road and the 'Kiboko' at Voi, if they didn't behave," he said. The "Kiboko" was a whip of rhino hide, he explained to me. From that moment I began to appreciate this Guard. His position seemed to cover a great deal of territory. He soothed the engine driver as a mother quiets a peevish child. With gentle, but firm, caresses he propelled him into his cab, and we proceeded once more on our way through the night.

At mile 63 we paused at McKinnon Road and gave the engine a water drench. We were now eleven hundred and eighty feet above sea level. The breeze was cool and velvety.

Then at mile 104 we labored into Voi. Mombasa lay eighteen hundred and thirty feet below us. It seemed in another world. Already the memory of it was fading. We took on water. A branch line used to run from here to Moshi at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro during the war. But now it was being torn up, and the country returned to the game herds from whom it was originally borrowed.

"Would it thrill you much," said Sackville, "if I should tell you that sanseveria, a valuable fibre, grows wild in the bush about here?"

"No. It would bore me," I told him frankly.

"Well, sanseveria's the kind of thing you should know about," he snapped, and never spoke of trival matters like this again.

Sleep was impossible, yet we flattened out our bed rolls and went through the motions of shutting our eyes and relaxing. They refused to stay shut. The will to relax was wanting. We vacillated between sticking our heads out of the window to look for the game herds, and putting out the sparks that darted into the compartment. At Tsavo, where in 1899 the "man eaters" were wont to lick their gory chops after masticating one of the railroad construction gangs, we were at mile 135. It

was discouraging to learn that we had lost three hundred feet of our hard earned altitude. For thirty-four miles the going had been down hill; now we had to begin all over again. To quiet the boys, and lull them to sleep, I told them how Colonel Patterson used to take the mangled bodies of the "man eater's" victims, drag them into the bush, and sit up over them with a rifle hoping the beasts would return to finish their meal. It put Sackville to sleep like a baby, but the telling excited me so I did not close an eye the rest of the night. I knew all the sensations of a night watchman in a cemetery.

Between six and seven o'clock we arrived at Makindu, having passed several stations during the night. They were silent and dark, so we will never know their story. Mombasa was two hundred and eleven miles behind us. All the lost altitude had been regained—and more. We were three thousand two hundred and eighty feet above the sea. Our engine was much encouraged. Gravity alone held us down, and we were beating it with a wood burner. They took the engine to a water tank, gave it a gargle, turned a small lake into its metallic void and rubbed down its sheet-iron withers. We

were covered with a rich coating of red dust—just as the books said we would be. Promising ourselves a wash at Nairobi, we enjoyed an English breakfast.

From where we sat eating our bacon and eggs, the Ukamba Game Reserve stretched almost to Nairobi, one hundred and nineteen miles away. Towards the old German border it spread fifty or sixty miles, forming a sanctuary of ducal proportions. The tracks formed the Eastern boundary line. On our right hand, legal death lay in wait for the game, on our left tranquillity and an ideal setting for undisturbed zoological felicity. But did the silly things take advantage of this? No! As soon as they saw the boundary, they made running leaps to cross it so they could get themselves shot.

Now we saw our first game. Far to the Westward, in the dawn, a huge white dome seemed to float on a bank of clouds. It was the snow cap of Kilimanjaro, sixty miles away, nineteen thousand feet above the sea. Even as we looked, it turned a delicate pink, incarnadined by the rising sun—tints of pearl and dove color fringed its edges. We gazed speechless. An old, burnt out, volcanic cone, corked up with a plug of ice—yet it looked as

rouged and painted as a débutante. Concealing its base were the rounding summits of the Bura Hills.

Then we saw them. They just seemed to appear. Our gaze dropped to the grassy plains—and there they were a couple of hundred yards from the track —several herds of them grazing. Never before have I come so near to falling out an open window. In front of my eyes were live Zebra running about loose! And they were striped yellow and black, exactly as depicted in the juvenile animal books. It was compensation enough for all the thousands of miles of travel.

Other things were running around, too. I asked Sackville what they were. "So sorry," he replied, "but I've a very bad memory for names.—What do you think I am anyway, a blooming ornithologist?"

At the next stop I searched out the Guard. Strangely enough he didn't seem to be busy at the moment, and cheerily gave me my first lesson in African Zoology. If that fellow didn't write the Origin of Species, it was only because he wasn't born soon enough. He made Darwin look like a third rate animal trainer.

The ostriches, strutting like gargantuan turkeys, we discovered for ourselves. Giraffes were easy,

too, shambling awkwardly away as though each movement caused excruciating pain,—gawkish, disappointing creatures, all neck and no noodle. There were wildebeests,—hundreds of them looking like an unsuccessful cross between the great American bison and a Jersey cow. And as we passed with a puff and a roar, they stood with never a quake, regarding us sternly. Hartebeests, that we had heard so much about, were merely silly looking animals, with the faces of sheep and the bodies of elk. Awkward, short horns added to the excessive length of their faces. Regarded from the front, the most clownish of all animals—from behind, hard to distinguish from any of the rest. From the rear, much of the African game looked the same to us. The "tommies," on the other hand, were dainty, little creatures, with stumpy tails ever twitching galvanically back and forth, and almost identical in appearance to their much larger cousins —the "granties." Only, as Sackville pointed out, the horns of the "granties" were much longer and shaped somewhat like a lyre, or, he went on to say, "if one held a couple of guitars on top of his head with the necks pointing upwards it gave one a better idea." I could never believe he took his Africa

seriously. Both these little gazelles were a beautiful soft beige color, with a striking black stripe around the water line. The eland, a huge, ox-like creature that cut up into wonderful steaks and chops, the largest of the African antelopes, completed this primeval picture. We saw no dinosaur eggs nor Ape-men being chased by megatheriums. But for the price of one ticket what we did see was plenty.

We now stopped at Simba, mile 231, thirty-three hundred feet in the air. We stopped for water. At many of the stations along here the water had to be rolled up in tank cars, but that didn't make any difference to our engine. Like an inebriate, it would have stepped on the heads of women and children to satisfy its thirst.

"Simba means lion," said Sackville, breaking what was for him a long silence. "There are lions about here, so the station is named Simba. Now there are also a lot of ticks hereabouts, but you never hear of them naming a station 'Ticks'! And as for flies, there are infinitely more flies than lions, or ticks. But do they name a station 'Flies'?"

"Words have an understood musical value," I broke in, "that certain people understand and play

on. They are the poets and the folk who name pullman cars and stoves——"

"You never hear of a station named 'Mice'," he continued sulkily. "Now here we are at one named Kiu, after the Kiu I suppose. The country hereabouts is undoubtedly overrun with Kiu, but what are they?"

At Kiu we lunched, two hundred and seventy miles from Mombasa and four thousand eight hundred and sixty feet above the well known sapphire sea. We were informed by our guide-book that here the unhealthy coastal climate ended, and the healthy climate of the highlands began. We prepared to become healthy once more.

In countless hundreds the game browsed about us. On every hand it fed, ruminated and frolicked. They wearied the eye with their infinite duplication. Surfeited, we lay back, only stirring on the approach of some sight distinctly out of the ordinary. Already we were on terms of intimacy with the "barnyard varieties."

During the morning we had caught our first glimpse of real aborigines. They came to the stations to look at the engine—just as they do at home. For twenty years they had been doing it, and still

their curiosity remained verdant. To be sure, the passengers seemed to divide honors with the engine, and maybe we were strange looking. I, for one, felt strange. So we stared back and forth at each other, we of the white—they of the black skins. The men wore a dirty piece of sheeting called "Americana"—the women, brass wire principally. The heads of the women were shaved, those of the men plastered with oil and red clay, or strands of wool were twisted in the kinks and gathered in a queue on the neck. "They're Wakamba," Sackville said. This was perfectly agreeable to us.

Then came Ulu, at miles 279. Fifty-two hundred and fifty feet up in the air—almost a mile. We stopped for water. The thought of water was beginning to revolt us. The horror of the water torture of the Spanish Inquisition became vivid to us. A short distance to the East, so the book stated, was an area where apples, oranges, apricots and peaches throve. It was a comfort to know that once more we were in a land capable of producing sound Anglo-Saxon fruit, instead of the burlesque varieties of tropical mush we had been sampling for three weeks. It got in one's ears, this fruit of the tropics. One's shoes almost had to be bailed out after a go

at it. Besides, most of it tasted as though it had been dipped in kerosene. And here it was, apple blossom time in Ulu. A wonderful country!

We entered the Kapiti Plains, huge, rolling prairies fenced in on the vague horizon by faint, blue mountain ranges. This was Kansas and the Dakotas in replica, the pampas of the Argentine, the steppes of Russia—minus the "Volga Boat Song." The game stretched as far as the eye could see. It mingled, too, on the friendliest terms, all scrambled up in a vast communal concord. Cheek by jowl grazed like and unalike, a zoological picture puzzle. Four miles out of Nairobi, in the River Bagas, the Game Reserve came to a moist end.

We clattered past repair shops and barracks for housing railroad workers. Then, without any warning, found ourselves in a well-built station. Nairobi! For twenty-two and one-half hours we had been straining every nut and bolt to breast this five thousand four hundred and fifty foot contour line at mile 330—and here we were!

We had never taken a railroad journey quite like this before. We were exhausted. Had we seen everything? Were we making the most of our opportunities? For a day and a night our emotions

had been so stretched that, like a pair of old faithful suspenders in which the rubber has been strained beyond its elastic limit, they refused to contract and were in a fair way to let us down. Flabby and useless was our will power; impotent and pulpy our vital forces. We had seen what we had seen. It was the best we could do.

We had arrived! Something ought to be done about it, but we hadn't the faintest idea how to begin.

III

NOW we suffered a serious loss. Sackville left us, and continued on North.

"Good-bye," he said.

"Where are you going?" I enquired with dismay.

"Back there," he replied, jerking his thumb over his shoulder vaguely, very vaguely.

"But what for?" I pressed him.

"Just to have a look," he answered.

"Good-bye," I said, and he was gone. I'd never see him again, that I knew, and for a day I missed him. I had come to rely on him to such an extent. It was just one of those in-at-the-window and out-by-the-chimney acquaintanceships. Many followed. Personalities flitted by, half revealed, and vanished, yielding their place to others. They were all going "back there" to "have a look." They were solid and real until one reached out to grasp them then, like smoke wreaths, they vanished, and one drew back a hand full of emptiness.

For a while we stood about in a dazed condition,

then saw a man from the steamer, named Gregg, who was taking his brand new wife somewhere into the Afric Netherland. He was engaged in disentangling himself from the Uganda Railroad. We attached ourselves to him like a pair of leeches, and did what he did—only more so. If he sneezed once, we sneezed twice. If he became full of rage, we bellowed. If he used a wheedling tone, we cooed like doves. Inasmuch as he already had a bride to look after, this must have been very annoying to him, but for us it proved to be good leeching, for in no time we found ourselves in a rickshaw rolling over a wide macadam road. A half naked and wholly odoriferous Kikuyu boy bucked in the shafts. A short distance from the station he stepped on a spike, or an old Gillette blade, at any rate something with an edge, and, uttering a piercing yodel, made an incredible leap into the air. This suddenly let us over backwards until we nearly touched the ground then, as he sank to earth, snapped us horizontal. Our necks went click, our teeth clack, simultaneously. For the rest of the day my neck felt like a swan's, but it violently awakened us to the fact that this was Nairobi—our journey's end—and the beginning of action.

Modern buildings faced the road. Store windows bulged with copious displays of merchandise. It was amazing. Our shops were no better at home. And here we had carried all this "kag" ten thousand miles! We were jogging along Government Road. At intervals squalid side streets, like poor relations, sprang from our aristocratic thoroughfare. On these dusty lanes were rows of Indian "dukas," small shops open to the air, where one might furnish anything from a bungalow to a battle ship at prices below cost. Oxen, with enormous horns, contentedly chewing cuds of mysterious African grasses, crowded speeding bicycles and American automobiles. We left the business section behind, to pass first the Official Buildings of galvanized iron, then the barracks of the King's African Rifles.

Two years previous there had been a "rising" on this very spot. Several thousand Kikuyu had gathered with the object of wetting their spears in blood and uttering horrid cries. Volleys were fired by a handful of black troops. Crumpled heaps dotted the roadway. The "rising" was over, even before some of the fellows in the clubs knew it had started.

This was Government Road. It wound its way almost to Parklands, a suburb full of pleasing villas that filled one with a languid sense of ease and security. Further out was the Muthaiga Country Club and Golf Links, a comfortable place—a very comfortable place. Here was champagne, caviar, lobster, dancing, advanced bridge and ladies and gentlemen immaculately dressed. A few miles away the game herds drifted lazily, cropping the parched grass of the dry season; while nearer yet, in the native village, the "kuks" lived the lives their forefathers had known since time was counted by notches on a short stick. It was all a fantastic jumble.

The supremacy of Government Road was almost uncontested. But near the station it was bisected by Sixth Avenue, more or less of an upstart thoroughfare leading away Northwards to the hills, dignified by the presence of Government House, the hospital, more golf links and the Nairobi Club, where the race meets were held. It had stores, too, and budding real-estate values, but with Government Road lay the prestige of antiquity.

This was Nairobi. There was a lot more to it than Government Road, Sixth Avenue, Parklands

and Muthaiga. But they constituted a frame work —a skeleton on which its personality was draped. This personality consisted of about twenty-five thousand souls;—three or four thousand Whites, ten or twelve thousand Asiatics, the balance natives. It is said that its Indian bazar covers nine acres, and its native life is compared to that of Omdurman, Cairo, Biskra and Tangiers. Possibly, but the atmosphere is distinctly English. Polo, race meets, babies and nurse-maids make it so.

We paused before the Norfolk Hotel—a low stone building. At the front gate grew a tree planted by Roosevelt fifteen years before. It was beginning to look old now and somewhat shriveled, but one derived a certain confidence from the mere fact it was there.

On entering the office, we were greeted by a lovely, white haired old lady. She sat behind the desk eating strawberries and cream. If, in her place, there had been a big burly man with a red neck and tangled black beard and, if he had been eating a plate of beans and noisily sucking up a cup of coffee, we should have complained bitterly. That would have been normal. We had come to

demand the abnormal as a natural right. Of course, everyone—rough hidalgos, hard boiled by the tropical sun, as well as dapper lads—called the lovely old lady "Aunty," and made much of her. Just the kind of thing one expects in Africa. We were shown to a room opening out on the ground floor of a court. There, amongst our bundles and boxes, we sat down to consider our situation. Here we were—yes, obviously—here we were, but what next?

There were several outfitters in town who managed safaris, and operated lost and found departments for the benefit of amateur Explorers. It seemed not a dull idea to search one of them out. Late as it was, we ran such corporation to earth, and across the top of a neat desk in a private office bared our hearts to a most courteous gentleman.

"I see," he said. "You want to go on safari. Now what kind of a bag have you in mind?"

It sounds ridiculous to say it, but at this question the name of every single animal I knew sprouted wings and flitted.

"Well, I'd like a well filled bag," I found myself saying—"a good bag; a nice bag." And all the time I realized I was cutting the atmosphere up

into imaginary chunks with my hands, shaping and patting them to conform to my idea of a nice bag. It was involuntarily idiotic.

"Ah! I see," he said at length. "Now, I don't know your tastes, but I am anxious to give you what you fancy. That's my business. If you kill a lion, you will want champagne. Now, no doubt"——

"If I killed a lion, I'd be so nervous I'd want a straight jacket," I broke in.

"It's merely to celebrate while your porters are doing the 'lion dance,'" he explained. "It's the correct thing. Do you care for pickles, jam and sardines?" he shot out, giving me a searching look.

"Not all at once," I answered. The mystery of this barbaric land, into which men vanished to be seen no more, was becoming clear—they all died of indigestion.

"Just a minute," he muttered, and made a rapid calculation on a piece of newspaper. "Big game hunting is royal and expensive sport," he said at length. "I can do you a modest safari, for two people, exclusive of your license, guns, ammunition, liquor, transportation, costs of lawsuits arising

from shooting people by mistake, preparing, packing and shipping the trophies——"

"That's F. O. B.," I started to say, but did not get a chance.

"I can do you this little shoot in the simplest way," he went on, "for £——." My brain reeled. For a moment I thought he was referring to the national debt of Jugo-Slavia. Not that the money mattered so much, but it seemed such an awful lot to pay for the pleasure of going out and shooting a "bag" of animals I didn't even know the names of.

I think he began to realize now that I was adrift on a strange sea. "Are you shooting for any institution? Do you want to take many trophies home?" he asked.

"No," I told him. "I'm not doing institutional shooting and as to shipping trophies home, I have a feeling it would be considered an unfriendly act by several people, principally my wife. We haven't a large house."

"Look here," he said. "Why don't you go out on some farm—many of them are crawling with game—settle down, and play around?"

"That sounds like an idea," I said. "Where?"

"I'll try and find one," he answered, with a scarcely concealed note of relief. "I don't know of any at the moment, but never fear—I'll find one, I'll find one!" And, from the tone of his voice, I knew he would, and if the measles broke out there after I arrived and the place had to be quarantined, he would only be temperately sorry.

Dinner that night was served in a long dining-room by native boys. Three jumps ahead of the Pithecanthropus Erectus expressed their Anthropological status. Over one ear they wore white skull caps of drawn work; from chin to ankle their chaste bodily beauty was concealed under a white night gown. When they barged down the room waving aloft a tray of soup, instead of an assegai, the floor reverberated and shook like a bowl full of jelly from the impact of their bare, horny feet. A primeval vanity seemed to fill their bosoms. To us they were only Slaves of the Soup Tureen, but they appeared to fancy themselves nothing less than Paladins.

We sat with Gregg and his bride. He talked of where he was going in a day or two, of the "plateau" where his farm was, and of a fellow who worked the next farm, named Flint. He spoke of

what a good shot Flint was, of guns, of hunting. His wife, fresh from Devonshire, listened—slightly wide-eyed.

He spoke of native servants, their oddities, their childishness, and to develop his theme told of a British resident who was giving a select dinner and had cautioned his Boy to have everything particularly nice, as ladies were to be present with delicate sensibilities and unusually refined tastes. A clear soup was served and consumed. The Boy came to remove the plates.

"The soup was very good," the host remarked.

"It ought to be," the Boy answered, "I strained it through one of your socks."

He watched the look of considerable annoyance which spread over his master's face, but mistook its significance.

"Don't worry, bwana," he added triumphantly ——"it wasn't a clean one."

"That gives you a rough idea of the 'native boy' story," said Gregg.

"Yes," I replied. "It's the roughest idea I've heard for a long time."

The bride's eyes were even wider now. Bride's eyes are very interesting in any latitude.

It was dark by the time we had finished dinner. The streets were silent and deserted. An atmosphere, at once lonesome and morguelike, settled over the town. We retired to dream of the "farm" on which we were going to "play about".

The night slipped by. Suddenly, a most blood-curdling sound aroused us, as though someone was being terribly ill; like the struggles of a soul about to pass. It was that dreary shadowland period 'twixt late night and early dawn that most souls select to wrench themselves from the human frame. This one, if it was a soul, seemed to be having hard work prying itself loose. The sounds advanced and receded. Sometime they resembled the braying of an ass, but such a distressed ass. In front of the hotel the "Thing" paused, and wailed so that my spinal cord vibrated like the G string of a badly played violin. Then, all was silent once more. It was dawn.

In the morning, when "Aunty" was quite alone, I made a guarded enquiry.

"What are they going to do with the body?" I whispered.

"What body?" she whispered.

"Didn't you hear it last night?" I asked, with muffled voice. "The violent death in front of the hotel?"

"Oh! That was nothing but a hyena—looking for titbits," she laughed. "Gruesome sound isn't it? Leopards are always running about in Parklands of an evening—and very often, lion. That man over there," she pointed to a frail looking individual across the verandah, "saw five lions sitting on the front steps of the Bank at the corner of Government Road and Sixth Avenue one Sunday morning—but that was years ago now."

"So!" I thought to myself. "It was only a hyena looking for titbits! And lions play about on the front steps of the local financial institutions! That's interesting."

"I should think it was up to the Game Warden to keep his animals where they belong," I remarked.

"He has his hands full keeping track of you big game hunters," she replied. "His life isn't easy. You take a good deal of looking after."

Now to be so naturally and unequivocally classed with this fearless fraternity, I will not deny, gave me a very powerful kick. She was a lady of rare

discernment, was "Aunty". Without another word, I put on my hat and went over to buy a game license. That was all I needed now. In every other respect, apparently, I resembled a big game hunter.

On the way to the Commissioners, I stuck my head into the office of the Outfitter:

"Well! How about the farm?" I enquired cheerily.

"Eh! Eh! Farm!" he exclaimed hazily. Then he saw who it was: "Oh, yes! Farm. Not yet. But you're going to get on a farm"—and I could almost hear him continue under his breath "if I have to commit murder to get you there."

The game license cost £100, and appeared to give me permission to kill everything but the Governor General. And yet, when read carefully, one was limited in a sense. I could only kill, say, three of this, and two of that, and one and a half of the other. Then the joker came to light. One elephant was £15 extra—or two for £45. A rhino was £5 extra,—or two for £15. A giraffe was £15; an ostrich £5. It was like a bargain sale at Woolworths. They charged one just as much for a shop-worn ostrich as one with perfect, lustrous

tail feathers. No goods on approval. No returns allowed. One had to keep a ledger and enter up all the game killed, as well as a day-book and journal. I began to regret I was not a Certified Public Accountant.

When it came to a license for my son, we struck a poser. "I simply can't issue a license to a lad thirteen and a half years old. He's decidedly a minor, and legally we can't recover damages from him."

"Good Heavens!" I thought, "do they think we have come down to wreck Africa?"—Though again, I must admit, I was slightly flattered. "I'll guarantee the damage," I suggested.

" 'Tisn't that," he answered, "the law doesn't permit me to issue a license to a minor irresponsible at law." Here was a pretty thing! A twelve thousand mile trip for nothing;—just to look at the scenery. The Delaware Water Gap would have been much nearer, and in addition is a very sound piece of scenery.

In the meantime, the Official was searching through dusty tomes and sheaves of papers. "I want to do it if I possibly can," he said at length. "Leave the money, and either I will send you a

license, or return the money within an hour. Wait at the hotel."

Full of nervous despair we left. On the way to the hotel something induced me to stop and cash a check—nervousness probably. One of the first things I like to do when nervous is to cash a check. It at once acts as a sedative, and gives me renewed confidence. The banking room was large, and opened onto the street. I was in the middle of the usual pleasantries with the paying teller. A dog walked in;—then another;—then four more in a body. They entered with the calm assurance of regular depositors. They circled around and smelled every object in the room, lingering over my legs as though fascinated by their bouquet. This formality over, the hair rose on their backs. Without moving his head, each regarded the other from the corner of his eye. They began to growl in a nasty way. Then one made a false move, and the battle was on. It was the last word in dog fights. At the moment the teller was in the midst of counting my money: "fifteen—twenty—twenty-five—excuse me an instant,"—he was around the counter in one jump, grabbed the dogs by the tails, threw them into the street and was back in another—

"thirty—thirty-five—forty," he continued without losing his breath even. "There you are, sir. Nice day!"

"It's a lovely day," I said, and left.

At the hotel was a note from the district Commissioner. Breathlessly we opened it. There was the game license: "Herewith I forward you a Traveler's License for your son," it read. "Under-Section 82 of the Penal Code a child of twelve years of age is held capable of judging the nature and consequence of his conduct." My son took this all gravely.

"Here is your license," I told him. "From now on you're a man. Section 82 of the Penal Code says so."

Now we were big game hunters. We had the clothes, a couple of wicked looking guns and game licenses—not to mention the twenty-five hundred grains of quinine. Is it to be wondered at if we swaggered slightly? We were chartered to kill; Certified Public Exterminators—with ledgers to keep. All we needed was the opportunity to open fire. We were Gridleys waiting for the word.

Gregg had told us we needed a "boy," or native

servant. He said he would pass the word along and have some toddle around to be looked over. It sounded wonderfully oriental. "Why don't we get a couple of boys, or a half a dozen?" I asked him. "I like the idea. I want to lie down, and clap my hands, and have things brought me. Every time I think of anything I want, I'll lie down and clap my hands."

"We'll start with one, and use him as a nucleus," he replied.

Several candidates had gathered in front of the hotel verandah. We called one forward. I left it all in Gregg's hands. Now, I was beginning to lean on him.

"Name?" said Gregg.

"Abdallah, bwana," he answered.

"Speak English?"

"Yes, bwana."

"What's this 'bwana' stuff?" I interrupted.

"It means 'worshipful master,'" said Gregg.

"He's hired," I said. "I want to be a bwana."

"Wait," said Gregg. "Got lots of chits?" he continued to Abdallah.

"Yes, bwana."

"What can you do?"

"Wash, cook, sew, clean guns, stand hard safaris, carry a load, stay honest."

"Do I look the kind of a fool who would believe such a pack of lies?" snapped Gregg.

For a moment Abdallah hesitated, anxiously searching for the right answer. Then it came to him.

"Yes, bwana," he said with triumph.

"He's hired now in any case," I remarked. "How much does he get?"

"Forty shillings a month," said Gregg.

I had not been a bwana more than twenty minutes when Abdallah appeared in the offing showing signs of distress. It seemed "he had no money and no clothes and would have to eat until we went on safari." "On the farm, you mean", I corrected him. Would twenty shillings do? Half a month's wages in advance? Yes. It would be a God-send.

Half an hour later I noticed a commotion at the gate—a small crowd gathered. Rickshaw boys, hotel servants, loafers and loungers were admiring something. It was Abdallah. He wore a gorgeous silk kimona, elaborate Turkish slippers and

a white skull cap of drawn work. In his hand idly swung a cane.

My son now uttered the remark he reserved for such highly charged occasions. I knew it was coming. It was applicable to a vast range of human actions, and had a definite conclusive ring to it.—"He's strutting his stuff," he said.

"No, sir, as Samuel Johnson would say in his contradictory way, he's strutting my stuff," I replied.

The next day Abdallah was making very heavy weather of it. He hadn't eaten for two days. He'd spent the twenty shillings, and owed a boy from Ujiji twenty shillings.

"He leaves full of money and no clothes and returns full of clothes and no money," remarked Gregg.

"What's the best dope for him?" I asked helplessly.

"He's your funeral now, bwana", said Gregg, with a nasty emphasis on the last word.

I advanced him twenty shillings more—a month's wages—and told him to eat with that, and continue to owe the boy from Ujiji. In an hour he appeared with an umbrella, a thick woolen tobog-

gan cap that pulled down over the ears and neck, and a terrific pair of yellow shoes—so large that it was unnecessary to untie them to step in or out of them. "I wonder if the bwana would advance ten shillings on my month after next wages?" he said. "Money has to be sent to my wife at Mombasa, and my stomach is sore from lack of food."

"Look here," I told him. "As far as I am concerned you can eat that silk night gown, that lace skull cap and those Turkish slippers, and you can shove them down your throat with the umbrella—and, if that doesn't reach far enough, use the cane, too."

"Now you're talking," said Gregg.

From then on he worked like an automaton, always cheerful and efficient—and he stayed honest. As is always the case with these "boys," when we said good-bye to him we were sorry, for we had come to lean on him also.

But to return to the day of the dog fight. That afternoon I felt strangely fidgety and depressed, as though something was hanging over my head. I went to my room, and sat down among the bundles. In the room next, on one side, was a man in the middle of an attack of fever; on the other,

a man who had just shaken the fever off. I found myself gazing at objects with a fixed stare. Gregg entered without knocking.

"Got a thermometer?" he asked. I handed him one. He shoved it into his mouth. In a minute he drew it out and looked at it.

"Hum! A little fever," he said. I looked over his shoulder. It read one hundred and four degrees.

"A little fever!" I exclaimed. "You've swallowed a kerosene stove." I wiped the thing off, and stuck it in my own mouth. When I withdrew it, it read one hundred and two degrees.

"My God! I've got malaria," I yelled, a tidal wave of depression engulfing me. In my raving I forgot all about Gregg. This was the worst blow of all.

"That's nothing," said Gregg. "I'll fix you. Let's see! I'll give you ten of quinine now—no, I think I'll make it fifteen—well, perhaps twenty would be better—"

"Well, make up your mind while there's still time," I broke in.

"That's it—twenty," he said. "I'll take twenty-five." We took it. "When you go to bed, take

fifteen aspirin. Now, we'll go and flatten a hot whiskey."

We "flattened" one. Then we "flattened" two more. The relief was almost immediate. My fever appeared to be checked. My depression vanished. The world seemed rosy. I began to realize what a wonderful fellow Gregg was. He had it over any living doctor in a way that was ridiculous.

"What you ought to do," he said suddenly, "is to come up to the 'Plateau' and stay with Flint on his farm"——

"Farm!" I cried in triumph.

"It's alive with game," he continued, "and you can go off from there on any kind of a trip you please." We "flattened" another.

"But I don't know if Flint would want us," I objected.

"They keep open house," he answered. "Certainly he wants you. I invite you now."

"When do you go?" I asked.

"Day after tomorrow, by auto," he answered.

I was absolutely a well man now. Not a twinge anywhere. After the way Gregg had cured my malaria, I would have followed him into a subway jam.

"I'm going with you," I said.

"Good," he replied. "Go buy yourself a car in the morning."

"Yes," I agreed, "I'll buy a couple."

"One is enough," he murmured, and we went to bed.

In the morning I realized what a severe illness I'd been through, and what a competent fellow Gregg was. My temperature was normal—I didn't need a thermometer to tell me that—, my spirits high, but somewhat erratic.

I went downtown and purchased an "Overland Four" with a "safari" body. At home it would have been called a "delivery body," but here it was a "safari." "I must have immediate possession," I told the man.

"Drive it away," he said.

"That's immediate enough for anybody," I answered, and did so. It was a "sudden country."

And so we loaded it with our "kag" and departed next day. The man at the outfitters rented us some more "kag." We had so much "kag" the springs groaned. "Kag" was festooned about us until we looked like peddlers.

"Maybe we've got too much 'kag,' " I suggested.

"You're as right as rain," he answered, with a smile like a benediction, easing me out of his office. "I knew I'd find you a farm."

"Good Lord! I had to get malaria to find it for myself," I told him, "and even now I don't pretend to know where it is."

"Well, you'll get there anyway," he remarked cheerfully. "Keep right on going, you can't miss it."

Gregg and his bride led the way in his car. My son, myself and Abdallah followed. Abdallah was dressed in a khaki tunic and shorts, and sat on the extra gasolene tin attached to the running board.

IV

NAIROBI faded into the distance. Soon even its memory became jumbled as had that of Madeira, Durban, Zanzibar, Mombasa before it. The road was good. It was not one of the Roman roads of England, framed in its hedges, nor a Route National of France, fading away into the distance between its rows of poplars, nor did it even approach one of our State Roads of Western New York, winding through fringes of "hot dog" stands—but it was a reasonable road, an open road, and it led "back there."

"This is 'good medicine,'" we thought. "One might imagine himself motoring almost anywhere but in Africa." We were over enthusiastic, however, for soon we were merely riding over a plain road. Then that term became but rank flattery. Soon, as is generally the case with shams and swindles, it gave up the fight entirely, pursued a drunk-

ard's course for a short distance, and died a vile death.

We began to labor heavily. Ours was a small car, almost entirely surrounded by "kag." It staggered under its load. Yet, as though it had been the issue of a questionable wedlock and ourselves one of the responsible parties, we excused and justified its existence. "It's such a little one," we murmured between clenched teeth. Every time we hit a pebble the springs reversed themselves.

It was not to be wondered at. Roughly, the following articles were cradled within and festooned about that automotive waif. Two officers' trunks full of clothes and shoes, two rifles, a revolver and their appurtenances, fifteen hundred rounds of ammunition, skinning knives, bed rolls, a "chop box" full of tinned food, a couple of kegs of tea, another box full of pots and pans, an axe for chopping trees out of the road, collapsible pails, a lantern, three bottles of whiskey, a can of kerosene, a coil of rope, ten Imperial gallons of spare gas, a basin-bath-and-stand, five hundred dollars worth of B.E.A. shillings and pennies strung on strings through the holes in their middles, canvas water-bottles, a sack of "potio" (coarsely ground corn meal for Abdal-

lah, supposed to be very nourishing. From the amount of foreign matter it contains, this is easy to believe. He was to get two and one-half pounds of "potio" daily. As a practical matter, he liked my supplies better), dubbin for boots (this is merely grease, but an Englishman would no more think of calling grease "grease" than he would speak of his "abdomen" as his "stomach"), roorki chairs, a couple of "pangas" (nasty looking cleavers), a 3¼ x 4¼ Graflex camera, sixty dozen film packs in hermetically sealed tins, a can opener for the films, half a dozen bottles of syrup for lemon squashes (the whiskey we soon gave away. The lemon squash we guarded with our lives. It was nectar), a syphon for making soda water by means of a metallic capsule of compressed carbonic gas, and numerous other things.

The list read like one of Walt Whitman's poems. The objects seemed to have no relation to one another. They synchronized with nothing. We spent many idle moments pondering the utility of several queer looking items, but to the end their inner meaning remained a dark secret. This was the bed rock of our "dunnage". The whole was capped with a fly tent and poles, weighing one hundred

and thirty-five pounds. This acted as a sort of lid to keep the chaff from flying away.

This tent was accompanied by two officers' camp beds in neat rolls. They were not four posters—they were a whole row of telegraph poles laid together and bundled with hay wire. When you tried to lift one, the veins in your forehead stood out like rubber tubing, and the muscles in your back did funny things. "They were heavy," as Sackville would have said.

Our dinner coats and store clothes had been deposited in the trunk room of the Norfolk Hotel. "We'd be delighted to keep them," said "Aunty." "We always do," and led us to a large room.

It was an amazing room, filled with a bizarre collection of personal belongings. There were ancient dusty trunks, scarred and mutilated by years of battle against superior forces, weird musical instruments, swords, antiquated muskets—the elephant guns of other days, charged through the muzzle with a double handful of black powder, a terrific slug of lead and a fervent prayer that when exploded the lot would come out the right end. There were clothes of every vintage since the days when Queen Victoria was a bride, antique boots

that had done much marching up and down in the world, officers' tin trunks, that looked as though they had been used as projectiles, and a few—a very few—valises like ours, virginal looking and innocent.

"It's been here for years—some of it," she volunteered. "They leave it here, then go off and never come back. Sometimes they're killed in hunting accidents. Those we know about. Others just vanish. We never can tell if they're coming back. So we keep on keeping it. As a rule when they do come back, they look like different people, all shaggy and—." Just then a large man with a bullet head and closely cropped hair entered.

"Salu," he greeted us. "Remember a couple of years ago I went up to the Plateau and left a phonograph here?" he continued, turning to "Aunty." His eye the while anxiously scanned the various piles of chattels. "There it is," he exclaimed eagerly, and began to fumble with an old dusty box. Then, with blood in his eye, barked—"Somebody's gone an' copped all the needles. Gad! You can't leave anything around five minutes without some bandit mussing about with it. But I know who did it. He'll hear from me—no fear."

He must have gone on to explain what form his revenge was going to take, we cannot be sure, for we left with the parting injunction to "Aunty": "Keep our bags down in front, for we're coming back, and coming back soon. And you'll know us when we come back—we won't be all shaggy."

Our car bumped along, scattering the fumes of half burnt gasolene far and wide over the Equatorial landscape. We could barely keep up with Gregg. Things settled down. They even became monotonous. Suddenly we passed a man driving furiously in the opposite direction. About every third bump he hit the seat. The rest of the time he spent trying to chin himself on the steering wheel. He passed with a roar. A few moments later Gregg pulled up. There in the grass lay two large bottles of beer, and several nuts and bolts.

"Did you find his teeth?" I asked him.

"His teeth are of no interest to me, but the fact that this beer is not iced is very annoying," he answered peevishly.

"Well, you've got to take things as they come," I soothed him, "though it was thoughtless of him to bounce off warm beer."

At the edge of a precipitous escarpment we

drank the beer, and gazed over a terrific landscape. We had traveled thirty odd miles, climbing steadily, and now at an altitude of seventy-five hundred feet stood and looked down into the Rift Valley—the greatest crack in the world. It is said to run from Beira on the Indian Ocean 20° South of the Equator northwards to Lake Rudolph, on through Abyssinia, diagonally across the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, and up the Valley of the River Jordan. Some crack! Learned people, who are enthusiasts on cracks, have gone so far as to intimate that they have located the Rift Valley in India. But what's the use of trying to make it any bigger. It's big enough. Later we were to know this from our own experience.

"By the way," said Gregg as we sat there enjoying our snack, "did you shake that thermometer down before you took your temperature that feverish evening?"

"Now that you speak of it—no," I answered.

"Neither did I", he continued dejectedly. "Maybe we weren't as sick as we thought we were."

"Well. The cure was pleasant, in any case," I remarked, "and appeared to locate a farm for us, so I guess it was all for the best. Though I've

never been in a country before where effects were produced by such strange causes."

Resuming our journey, we made a long, abrupt descent. It was approaching noon. The bottom of the Rift shimmered with heat waves. At the foot of Longonot, an extinct volcano, we lunched. A pistol shot away lay Lake Naivasha. About us, on open plains, hartebeest, zebra and some ostrich also lunched. The cone of Longonot was carved by the rains into hundreds of bold ravines, each separated from its neighbor by a sharp ridge. Some months later we hunted buffalo on those ridges and reached terms of familiarity with them, but as we gazed at them now they seemed wrapped in mystery. The interior of the cone, hundreds of feet deep and large in area, was alleged to be peopled with strange beasts and loathsome reptiles. As long as we did not have to enter it, there was no desire on our part to investigate the truth of the legend.

While we sat there, two men with faces the color of boiled beets, collars open at the throat, battered sun helmets cocked at a rakish angle, drove by in a Ford held together by string and some advanced form of Christian Science.

"Hello!" said Gregg. "How's everything on the Plateau?"

"Fine! How's everything down below? So you're back, are you?" they replied, and disappeared in a cloud of dust in the direction of Nairobi.

"Some fellows from near Eldoret," explained Gregg. "Haven't seen them for eight months."

"That was a twenty-two thousand volt greeting," I remarked. "I guessed you hadn't seen each other for some time."

"Well, there's no use making a song about those things," he retorted.

We passed Lake Naivasha, at one time the earthly paradise of Paul Rainey. A dozen years ago a howling wilderness—now tame, and with barely a bleat left in it. We thundered through Gil Gil over a track baked hard by the sun of ½° South. Soon we would know the worst about this Equator business. Gil Gil did not detain us. It consisted of one wide street, and a bad smell. It was a sheep town. We forded streams romantically, immersed in water to our withers. Once we passed through an outcropping of what seemed to be pure chalk. Food for all the billiard cues in

the world, entirely wasted. Then, in a region bold and rocky, troops of baboons shambled across the road creating unpleasant traffic conditions. There were no "stop and go" signals. We looked at them, then at Abdallah, certain that any moment he would wave to one, greeting him by name. Some zebra grazed on an open hillside. A slight shower came up. We passed through fields of wheat and corn, and crossed the railroad track into Nakuru. The day's run was over.

It was a snug, homely, little town with a rambling hotel, most of the arteries of which led to the bar. It was here we met Boggs Hawkins, who drove about the country selling Ford brake lining. His personality was a mingling of assurance and madness. He acquired our acquaintance by a query: "Pass any baboons coming over?" We admitted the baboons.

"Watch out for them," he warned us. "Simpson was driving through there two days ago. He was half asleep. Turned a corner suddenly, and ran into a bunch of them. They thought he was assaulting them and got in such a panic they jumped all over the car. Baboons swarmed on the old bus like ants. Then he thought they were at-

tacking him, and began to yell. That made things worse. A big ape, frightened half to death, jumped onto the front seat, grabbed the steering wheel away from Simpson, drove the car a quarter of a mile down the road, and crashed it into a big tree —a total wreck—"

"Just like Iris Fenwick did in *The Green Hat,*" I interrupted.

"Yes. I guess so," he continued, "only Simpson had a fifteen mile walk."

Boggs warmed up nicely now and gave freely from a large reservoir of hunting experiences. He joined us for dinner so he could tell us more. He sat with us after dinner so he could continue to tell us more. Once more the bride's eyes grew wide, so did mine, so did my son's. Gregg went to sleep. "What was the use?" he said later. "When he wasn't boasting, he was lying."

At length we followed his example. Our rooms were in a one story annex opening onto empty blackness. Neither the window nor the door would shut. For some time neither would my eyes. Our beds were square frames laced with hide. The mattress was stuffed with shucks. The material that had supplied the sheets was a mystery. We tried

hard to solve it, naming over all the materials we had any knowledge of that were rough like sandpaper. The next thing we knew it was morning. A negro boy stood by the bed with tea.

V

"SOMETHING'S got to be done. She simply won't stand the strain," I remarked to Gregg at breakfast.

"She'll do very well," he replied with confidence. "It's been an easy trip so far."

"That may be," I argued, "but all her nuts and bolts are coming loose. Her springs are working like swivels and something tells me that her drip-pan is hanging by a thread."

"Oh!" he said with a dazed expression. "Of course—your auto! As you spoke I was naturally thinking of Doris."

"Here's my advice," he went on after a moment of silence. "You're carting a load of bally junk in that car. Jettison about half of it, you know—what they do on sinking ships—chuck it overboard."

"Certainly I know," I remarked with some warmth, ready in a moment to leap to the defense of my miniature moving van.

"That circus tent and those officers' four-posters," he continued, "they'd break the back of a sixty ton freight car. Go over to the station and ship them back to Nairobi."

It was a wrench to my pride—for I never saw a nicer lot of "kag"—but I followed his advice. The tents and officers' beds were deposited on the station platform. At once, like drooping violets after a Spring shower, the springs rose jauntily. Next, I proposed to the Indian station master that he freight the lot to Nairobi. He agreed, with urbanity.

"You have attached shipping tags?" he enquired.

"No," I replied.

"Then it is impossible to accept the consignment," he answered. "The regulations clearly state that all freight must be tagged, and the tag must bear the shipper's name and name of consignee."

"All right," I said. "Give me some tags. I'll furnish the pen and ink personally."

"But I haven't got any," he replied.

"Well, where in the name of my sacred aunt can I get some?" I enquired.

"I don't know," he said. "There are none in town that I know of."

"Well, make some," I suggested, controlling myself with an effort.

"It would not do," he replied calmly. "The regulations state that all freight must be tagged, and the tag must bear the shipper's—"

Visions of another day spent bumping the axles rose before me. It looked as though my "kag" was going to be hard to lose. "Listen to reason," I urged in a voice that was a yelp in spite of all I could do.

"I can't," he said. "The regulations—"

"Shove them down your oesophagus," I murmured, then, summoning what remnants of control still remained to me, addressed him calmly: "Can you think of no possible way of accepting this consignment? It means a great deal to me."

"I could, I suppose, send to the next station for some tags by the up train, take the details down on a piece of paper, write and attach the tags for you. But it wouldn't be regular," he suggested dubiously.

"Do it!" I cried. "Do it! Let's be irregular. Let's perform this gorilla act so that our posterity

can say proudly, 'Regard us. Once we had an ancestor who broke a regulation,' " and laughing rather wildly I rushed out of the place before his conscience had a chance to ferment.

"What have you been up to?" said Gregg. "You look all flushed up and excited."

"Hurry," I muttered. "We must get away from here quickly before that Indian in there changes his mind."

We lit out. It was my first practical contact with a Babu. In the future I slunk around back alleys in order to avoid them.

El Dama Ravine lay to the Northward some forty miles, just a shade over the Equator; Nairobi about a hundred miles behind us. The sun beat down. Whirling dust "devils" rose like living columns into the sky. Flat topped mimosa trees, well scattered, dotted the landscape. This was the Africa we had seen in pictures. No living thing was visible. It was a sun-baked solitude.

Relieved of its dead weight the car bounded over the road like a young gazelle. Its nuts and bolts ceased to groan. Even its drip-pan appeared more at ease and ceased its struggles to escape and go its own way. All was well with the world. We

could have sung, but refrained. Then we apparently began to climb. The grade was not visible to the naked eye. It was a skulking grade, and proclaimed itself only from the fact that we were unable to get out of low gear. At length, we began to boil, then, with no warning at all, developed into a spouting geyser on wheels. Once we stopped at a brook, but as soon as the radiator-cap was half unscrewed it blew into the air and vanished. The cloud of yellow muck and steam which followed gave our faces a mottled appearance that lasted for some days. We poured a pail of water into it. There was a slight puff and it, too, rose into the air and floated away, a pretty little cloudlet driven before the winds of the world. From then on, it was treated as an air cooled car.

At El Dama Ravine we hesitated for lunch, then lunged on through a virgin forest of gigantic trees with unpronounceable, but romantic, names.

Now the grade grew unequivocally steep. The cloud of steam from our radiator increased in direct ratio. The scenery appeared dimly and spasmodically, as through a heavy fog. At length, at an elevation of nearly nine thousand feet, we entered a graceful forest of bamboo, which cast

shadows, lacelike and feathery, on the dim track. It was a land of ever changing backgrounds. Soon we reached the main freight road between El Doret on the Plateau and Londiani on the railroad. Numerous ox-wagons plodded along, urged forward by naked savages screaming falsetto directions in an apish language. Like the army teamster, their driving was entirely a vocal matter. Their command of invective was fluent; designed for stinging sluggish beasts into action.

At length Gregg halted. As we pulled up along side, he remarked: "We're on the Plateau." The light was getting dim. We might have been anywhere, but our pulses responded. We were near our journey's end. Some ninety by thirty miles in area this plateau, that we had heard so much about, reared itself nearly eight thousand feet above the sea. Almost treeless, in the light of the dying day, it stretched away, as far as the eye could see, like the rolling prairies of Kansas. "A lot of Dutchmen up here," said Gregg. "From South Africa —Boer farmers. Thrifty. They swallow their food without chewing it, so they won't wear their teeth out." Even the simplest thoughts were expressed in hyperbolical language in these regions.

We turned off the main road to sway over a dim track. In our path two savages squatted beside a small mound of earth, the top of which had been scraped off. They were dipping their hands within and transferring something to their mouths that appeared to accord them great saisfaction. For an instant we paused in the dusk beside them. They were engaged in eating ants. Not the small, dwarfish variety that we were familiar with, but large, black, succulent fellows about an inch long with sway bellies and nice crisp wings. "Good," Abdallah remarked. "Sour like the grenadine."

"You're a cannibal," I replied, and proceeded after Gregg, who was rapidly vanishing across the rolling table-land.

Suddenly we were in the midst of game. On all sides it stood eying us with amazement. Shapes large and small flitted eerily about. Eyeballs glittered luminously. There were soft rustlings, scamperings, stampedes on every hand. In a large, dry swamp between one and two thousand head chewed meditative cuds. The ubiquitous zebra, hartebeest, topi, oribi, reed-buck and wart hog stepped forward, each in turn, to personally express his resentment at our intrusion. It was a vast con-

vention of quadrupeds to which nearly every State of the Animal Kingdom had sent delegates.

We bumped and swayed for a quarter of a mile, then came to an abrupt halt behind Gregg in the midst of a desolation of huge ant hills, cone shaped affairs, six or eight feet high. It was equivocal scenery—exactly the kind a person would choose if getting lost was his object.

"We must be off the road," Gregg shouted back. Of course it was impossible for me to guess a thing like that for myself. It had been a long day. I was getting touchy. "Well," he added, "it doesn't matter, we'll go cross-country."

The idea was sound, but there was no country to cross. It was all up and down, like Switzerland. At length we picked our way to the top of a small bluff, to surge down into an open space, vaguely surrounded by low buildings. It was Leathers' farm. At once we were surrounded by dogs. Dogs of every conceivable size and shape, dogs with no shape at all, rose out of the ground and submerged us. The night became hideous with their yelling. In the background, like afreets fresh from the bowels of the earth, the dark forms of natives flitted about.

From a low, stone building emerged a group of people with lanterns. Immediately Gregg and his bride were the center of a storm of welcome. They were home at last. There was Leathers, owner of the farm,—his wife, Flint, their son-in-law,—and his wife, to tell them so. But, if it was home to Gregg, to us, it was only another strange environment. Everything was novel, even the sky over our heads was frosted with stars that were new to us. We stood on the outskirts of this group of friends, and listened to the dogs howl. At length, Gregg stepped back suddenly and trod on me. "Oh, yes," he exclaimed. "Here are a pair of lads who want to go hunting. They have some very nice looking clothes, twenty-five pounds of Epsom Salts and a lot of policemen's whistles. What can you do for them?" This served as our introduction.

We all moved into the house. It was a plain, rectangular, one-story house of stone blocks, with a tin roof. Architecturally, it was not the Mausoleum-Roman type, nor was it early Don Quixote or Italian-Gothic. It wasn't even modern Flushing. It was just a house, and yet withal a comfortable house. The main door opened into a glass-enclosed

verandah, garnished with a strange mixture of heads, horns, guns, skins, saddles, guns, a sewing table, guns, rain coats, double terais, sun helmets, guns—all battered and worn.

From this enclosure a door opened into a small, comfortable bedroom, with walls plastered and papered. Another door led into the dining-room, a long room with a small shelf of books in one corner and an upright piano in another. The kitchen opened off this room, as well as the bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. Leathers. Still another bedroom lay beyond theirs, entered from the front porch. If a small store-room in one corner of the building be mentioned, the architectural details of this African home lie fully revealed.

I was allotted the boudoir opening off the glass vestibule,—my son, the store room adjoining. It was a room full of fragments; a Sargossa-sea of forgotten scraps. There were pieces of saddles, spears, farm implements, pieces of most everything in the world, but no one single complete unit. There was a piece of a bed, and part of a chair. It held him enthralled. He would not have exchanged it for the lush accommodations of the most sybaritic of the Louis'.

Gregg and his wife, who had decided to stay a few days while they opened their own house, took the remaining guest-room. Flint and his wife occupied a small frame cottage, a few yards from the main house.—And there we all were, almost on the equator, as snug as could be.

To the rear, barns and granaries, together with the ridge we had barged down, connived in forming a hollow square. Such was the ground plan of this plateau farm.

Flint sat down next me on the enclosed porch. We rocked for a few moments in silence. Then he said: "So you want a little shooting? Well, I guess we can fix you up. At this season of the year the farm work is light. I propose that we target your guns in the morning. In the afternoon we'll take the dogs out for wart hog. The next day—Sunday—we'll send a 'chit' to the neighbors and have a 'drive'. There are two or three good 'fleis'—swamps, you know, near by. Monday we'll take an ox-wagon, half a dozen boys and do a short ox-wagon 'safari'— say three days—probably over to an abandoned farm called 'Hobson's Choice'. Let's see, that brings us to next Friday week. That Saturday we'll start for the Elgayo

Reserve after Big Game—it's a wild place, and hot —at the bottom of the Rift Valley."

"I know, the big crack," I interrupted.

"Yes," he replied. "After a fortnight down there, we'll go up to the Nzoya River for a week or so after water-buck and lion, if any. Then, if you have any time left, we can make a short trip somewhere else."

"Yes," I said. That's the only comment I could make at the moment.

Six weeks later, when it was all over, we arranged terms. To me, they were highly satisfactory. Here then we stood on this snappy February evening, with a white hunter, an automobile, a personal boy descended from a gob of ink, our lives all planned out for the next six weeks, and even on the very next day about to engage in the perils of the hunt. We'd been in Africa about a week. I was dumfounded. Words failed me. I seem to remember gulping twice and remarking: "Gosh!"

A boy entered with coffee and cake. "Just a little appetizer before dinner," said Mrs. Leathers. The strength we gained from this light nourishment moved us to unpack the car and settle down.

My room was most comfortable. Of course there was no plumbing, but one took little notice of its absence. Whenever there was any water to dispose of, the Byzantine method was employed—it was shot out the window. I came to form a great attachment for this kind of plumbing. A luxurious bed, heavy with quilts, stood in one corner of the room. The quilts were a surplus, until just before dawn. Then they became thermostatic blessings, for the air seemed bitterly cold and searched out the marrow in one's bones. Here we were, almost dancing on the Equator, and suffering from the chilblains, so to speak. It seemed anomalous. It felt frosty.

We were now initiated into the art of bathing in a tea-cup. The portable bathtub is a little larger than a tea-cup, but its design is identical. Many times in the future it was not convenient to unpack it, and we used such receptacles as were handiest at the moment. Each night produced its own peculiar tub; a Standard Oil tin, or something that might resemble a crooked-necked squash hollowed out,—in fact anything that would hold water. Unconsciously, we learned the art of the contortionist;

how to unhinge ourselves and jam our bodies into a pail of water without spilling a drop.

On the occasion of our first encounter with the collapsible bathtub, I called my son aside:

"Now attend to what follows," I told him. "You're a man now. Section 56 of the Penal Code says so. Moreover you're in Africa. At home, the back of your ears and important neck areas are your Mother's affairs; here, they're your own. See that they get such attention as they deserve." They did. From then on, he gave me no trouble whatsoever on this score. He completely ignored them.

We dined at seven. Eight of us around a long table in a room full of horns. But the dinner! Its memory lingers. There was oribi soup; then coarse corn meal porridge, followed by fried chicken and ham, fried potatoes, bread, butter, tea, milk, jam, preserved fruit. It took no time to appreciate that Mrs. Leathers was a hospitable lady; the type of lady who, if one did not partake at least three times of each course, put it down at once to weak health and threatened a physic. It placed one in a terrible dilemma. I shall never forget the result of that first meal. I ate until my eyes became glazed and

the buttons on my tunic were at the bursting point. Then I staggered to the nearest sofa, and propped myself against a pillow.

The meal was served by three slender native girls, dressed in ancient blue serge coats with balloon sleeves; the vintage that made the fair sex of the early nineties feel invincible. Their ear lobes were punctured and stretched prodigiously, but they wore no ear plugs, the empty lobes being looped back over the top of the ear in Medusa like coils. They were piquant, roguish, young nymphs, and one of them persisted in recalling Marie Tempest to my mind. Why, I can't say. The service was deft, and giggly. Evidently, from their point of view, we were performing a screamingly funny ritual. Maybe it was, but it didn't seem so to us. To have someone hand you a plate of soup, give you an appraising look and burst into hysterical titters is disconcerting.

After dinner someone played on the piano. The airs were not new, but sounded celestial nevertheless. Later we played a rubber of bridge. At nine o'clock Mrs. Leathers served a light collation of milk and cake. "I don't like to see people go to bed on an empty stomach," she said.

With some misgivings I extinguished my lantern, to be enveloped by the darkness of an African night. By my side lay a loaded rifle. Not that there was any danger. It was merely a custom—a safeguard,—but such a safeguard as provoked in me an annoying lack of interest in sleep. It was the first time I had ever slept with a loaded rifle. I was unfamiliar with the etiquette demanded by such an occasion.

My window opened wide to the chill night air. In fact, no means of closing it were provided. The stars, indescribable in numbers, scintillated like diamonds, casting a dim half-light over our table-land. But it was the pandemonium that held one spellbound. Zebra barked nervously, hyenas wailed, reed buck whistled and jackals uttered sharp staccato yelps. A symphony of sounds produced by fright, hunger, anger, love, hate; vocalized against a background of minor grunts, groans, squeals and squeaks. It was an appalling din, and rather hair-raising.

The volume of sound ebbed and flowed. Like the frantic beating of great drums rolled the pounding hoofs of the zebra herds as they fled from lurking danger, imaginary or real, carrying all be-

fore them. One could almost feel the earth tremble from the impact of a thousand frenzied hoofs. Faintly from afar the drumming would start rising to such a climax one wondered if the stampede was about to pass over his very body, then it would diminish, fade out like dying thunder, and leave nocturnal affairs in the hands of the hyenas and reed buck. With a sigh of relief it was possible now to relax with the hope that the poor things were finally at peace in some safe haven. Then back they would come, tearing furiously through the night. At first it stirred the imagination to lie snug and listen to their surging, nervous rushes. But, after a few hours of it, one cursed them for a pack of neurasthenic idiots. That is, if he thought twice about the matter; for, in time, these sounds of the night wove themselves into one's dreams; a monstrous lullaby. One depended on their presence. They were soothing and narcotic. Just as the soporific rumble of the "L" becomes necessary to the slumbers of the jaded New Yorker.

About 2 A. M. a sudden, awful clangor arose in the yard. Dogs howled. Human cries split the air. I seized my rifle, and leaped through the window. "How much it resembles a Harlequin's

trap door," I thought, as I hit the ground. Before plunging through the window, I had attempted to leap straight through the ceiling, but could find no outlet. The only practical opening was the window. I didn't seem to care where I leapt, as long as I leapt somewhere.

In the yard Flint was untangling a seething mass of dogs, around the edge of which native boys gibbered.

"Who's been murdered?" I asked.

"A porcupine," said Flint, "and before we get through pulling the quills out of the dogs it'll be breakfast time."

Ever so faintly dawn tinted the cloudless East with colors of exquisite softness. As at a given signal, the frenzied sounds of the night were hushed.

VI

AT 6 A. M. I was roused by a native boy, and flooded with tea. Sleep lay heavy upon me, and the vague impression that I had been leading a rakish life refused to be dissipated by returning consciousness. It had been a hard night.

The world was now as silent as a monastery. A delicate, rosy light drenched the Plateau. Life would remain tranquil now until darkness fell, then once again the world of hoof and claw would become hysterical and vociferous—so Flint informed us. Day and night, year after year, this was the program. It never varied. The sun rose about 6 A. M., and set about 6 P. M. the year round. Aside from spells of rain that turned the land into an impassable mire, seasons were unknown. I enquired as to the absence of the lion's roar, a sound we had yet to hear, only to be told that the last lion on this part of the Plateau had been killed eighteen

months ago. It was a matter of two years since the last rhino had been killed. This was depressing. The old days were almost over. It's a sad and regrettable way "the old days" have.

We made our appearance, to find that Flint had been up and away an hour, mapping out the work of the boys in the fields. There were upwards of two hundred of them. At eight we breakfasted, and it was a breakfast such as men demand as an inherent right in the great open spaces—coffee, tea, porridge, ham, eggs, oribi steaks, bread and jam. Incidentally, and to dispose of these gastronomic matters once and for all, our next meal did not take place until eleven o'clock, when a light collation of coffee and cake was served, with pie as a side dish. Until 1 P. M. our digestive tracts were permitted to lie fallow. Dinner was then served; the kind of a dinner calculated to restore the vital force of muscular fibres that had been driven hard;—soup, meat, potatoes, vegetables, pastry, coffee. Then, for an hour, we indulged in "shut-eye." At least the others did. Personally, I spent this quiet hour with forced draughts open in an attempt to incinerate the surplus charges of food under which my system was

staggering. At four o'clock there was a good sound tea; at six, coffee and cake; at seven, dinner. It was a culinary cycle that would have strained the capacity of a vulture.

But to return to our first morning. "We'll target our guns now", said Flint after breakfast. At the back of the house, against a bank of earth about sixty yards distant, lay a white rock the size of a pumpkin. The .275 Rigby, the .405 Winchester and the revolver were produced, not to mention numerous cherished weapons belonging to Flint. We shot standing, kneeling, lying, running, walking, from the hip, hindside to. We all but stood with our backs to the stone, and shot at it between our legs. The way we powdered that stone afterwards gave me a feeling of shame. All we had to do in order to hit it was to pull the trigger. It seemed impossible to miss. Several times we swung on it, deliberately shooting high or low with the definite object of missing, but even this was useless. The inevitable puff of dust appeared right in the center.

"This seems like cruelty to rocks," I remarked.

"Well, it's easier to hit a rock than a charging rhino," old man Leathers suggested. He had

whiffed the powder, and appeared with a tremendous Jeffries that shot a cartridge as big as a Corona Corona, and nearly as expensive. Gregg brought out his .350 Rigby. Flint produced some kind of a mongrel musket. What followed resembled an attack on the Hindenburg line. This little practice left me calm, with a feeling of invincibility and confidence.

In the course of the morning, two or three "boys" teetered in holding short split sticks in front of them. In the cleft portions were thrust "chits," the end of the stick being bound with grass to secure them. They were the messenger boys of the Equator. One passed them on the roads continually striding along with their wands held to the front, tireless and full of importance. One of the "chits" I couldn't help but see. It was addressed to Mrs. Leathers. "Thanks for the book," it read. "Hope you are well. Ride over and see me one day. Dorothea."

"Now that's nice," I said. "Where does Dorothea live?"

"Just over there—about twelve miles," Mrs. Leathers replied.

"Do you mean to say this boy is going to travel

twenty-four miles merely so Dorothea can hope you are well?" I exclaimed.

"Why not?" she answered. "That's no distance at all. Often the boys are sent eighty or ninety miles on errands. That takes about three days though. Almost every day one of our boys goes to Eldoret and back—that's only eighteen miles one way—with my butter, eggs and bread. I have regular customers there. He carries them in a basket on his head—the eggs and bread, of course," she hastened to add.

Some weeks later we were camped one day forty-six miles from the farm. Mrs. Leathers had a baking day. She prided herself on her bread, and this lot looked exceptionally toothsome, so she sent us over a loaf by a boy. He left in the morning arriving at our camp just before sundown. Next day he returned to the farm—ninety-two miles in twenty-four hours to deliver a loaf of bread.

On one occasion we sent a boy to El Dama Ravine, a round trip of ninety-six miles. At the end of the second day he was home, but for several hours Flint had been wondering why he was taking so long. They accomplished incredible feats —these messengers—some harder to believe than

others. When traveling, their commissary department consisted of a gourd of shelled corn. They did not travel on their stomachs, that is certain. When night overtook them, the nearest bee hive hut was a sanctuary and they were always welcome, for they were honey pots of gossip.

Our Plateau farm was an organism complete in itself, a world apart. Its life was almost feudal; its wants supplied internally by necessity. The customs, usage and legends that grew up around it were but expressions of the personalities of its virile inhabitants. It consisted of ten thousand acres of land alive with game. Its principal industry seemed to consist in growing corn, wheat and flax for this game to frolic in.

To be sure, there was a truck garden on the sunny side of the house where apples, oranges, figs, bananas, pineapples—in fact everything fruity—grew in the friendliest confusion, for the climate was a strange mingling of the frigid and torrid zones. In another corner of the yard, chickens clucked and laid smooth white eggs in the manner familiar to us all. Cows, unmistakably bovine, yielded up their foamy liquor without a protest. Pigs, waxed fat on the world's leavings, only to

leave it and become flitches of bacon. Veal gamboled on the hoof, and mutton bucked on slender trotters. There were honey bees that hummed of drowsiness, and plunged their daggers into the hearts of old world flowers. There were many other things that furthered human comfort and created atmosphere of drowsy peace. But completely circumscribing this tiny oasis lay Africa, savage and relentless. Red fangs and gory jowls stalked each other in the darkness. That out there lay terror and death by violence one was never in doubt. The smell of blood was almost perceptible.

Nails, on the farm, degenerated into pegs of wood, rope, strips of hide. Meat consisted of whatever fell to the rifle. An out-house was built in a day by savages, a framework of thin poles thatched with dry grass. The nearest railroad, at Londiani, was some fifty miles away. Hawks stole the chickens. Wart hogs played squat tag in the "mealies." Reed buck satisfied fastidious appetites in patches of young wheat, and neurasthenic zebra made irresistible nightly charges through barb wire fences, sweeping all before them. But it was fascinating farming—to watch. There was a small flax operation in which the flax was grown, pulled, rippled,

retted, grassed dried and scutched by native boys who, only a few years previous, had taken their fun by plunging keen assegais into the softer parts of other native boys and uttering diabolical yells. At the time, the flax market had recently dropped from around four hundred odd pounds per ton to eighty or ninety, and the word flax was more or less synonymous with profanity. In fact, at this time, it could not be said that any of the products of the soil commanded prices that lured the farmer into dreams of opulence. Farming in Africa appeared to be about as profitable as farming on Long Island.

"How did old man Leathers ever come to settle way up here?" I enquired of Flint during a lull in the day's program.

"Ten years ago he came here on a hunting trip," he answered. "He was a retired farmer in South Africa at the time. His blood got all stirred up and he almost bought a farm. It was luck for him he didn't, for when he returned home and began to talk this country up to his family they gave the whole show the thumbs down. His two daughters were in college at the time, and the idea of pioneering did not get a single vote. He came up here

again; again he was tempted, he was only human; this time he fell. He started to buy land. Before he was through, he owned ten thousand acres of beautiful, virgin, hunting country. But he argued that if the game herds did well on the Plateau, so would cattle. He built this house, and moved the family up from the South, lock, stock and barrel. The cattle died of queer diseases—the game continued to wax and flourish. Of course, we will be able to control these diseases in time, but until that time comes—here we are."

"It sounds simple," I remarked, to give him a chance to catch his breath.

"It is," he resumed. "Pioneering is one of the easiest things in the world to get into—and one of the hardest to get out of. Other farms were taken up; some by relatives, others by wandering strangers. Eldoret acquired a metropolitan background. They opened a bank, a store and a church —and a couple of gin mills to keep the parson occupied. In no time there were nearly a thousand inhabitants on the Plateau."

I labored over some rough mathematics. "That figures about one and seven-tenths square miles to each inhabitant, doesn't it?"

"Yes," he answered. "It's getting congested. People are running all over the place."

Now, I learned that three thousand acres was considered a small farm, of which a hundred acres might be under cultivation—the balance in some degree satisfied a universal craving for space on the part of the owners.

"Now about yourself," I asked him, "and then I won't ask any more questions."

"I qualified for the law in England, and came out here twelve years ago. That ended the law. I reformed, and decided to earn an honest living. The war came—we had a good show here, by the way—I met Mr. Leathers' daughter. We were married, and now I'm helping my father-in-law run this farm."

"Thanks," I said, "I never heard of a more rapid career."

If I add that he was lean and wiry, a very accurate rifleshot, and had experienced all the dread diseases of Africa, his portrait, though somewhat blurry, is complete.

A small band of befeathered warriors appeared, and lined up in front of us. "Some of our Nandi trackers," said Flint. "Stout fellows. They're the

best boys from the Nandi village, just over there. These are the boys that kill lion with their naked spears. The trouble with them is, if we see a lion they'll run ahead and kill it before you have a chance to shoot. When they do, there isn't enough left of the skin to put in your eye."

"They sound like a bevy of fully paid insurance polices to me," I answered. "I hope it can be arranged so they are never far away." And they never were. For twelve weeks they heeled us day and night.

They were out to make an impression on their new employer, so had girded on everything of a warlike nature they possessed. A thin narrow blanket shielded their bodies from the sun. From a belt hung a very keen two-edged sword, as well as a runga, or knobbed stick, for throwing. They carried large shields of Buffalo hide, covered with simple designs, and assegais, polished until they shone. Around the necks of some were boas of eagle feathers, others wore tall caps of fur. Very brave and warlike they all looked as they strutted about.

Six or eight Kavirondo porters were also added

to the staff. "We'll use them as a nucleus on any trip we take," explained Flint, "and add local porters as needed." They were large husky boys, all of whom had been working for Flint for years. Evidently they knew his methods, for he never had to speak to them twice. Here we stood now, with eight Nandi and six Kavirondo permanently attached to us, a white rock that we could not miss, and plenty of unexploded ammunition. We were big game hunters by brevet—if not by performance.

About us the life of the farm went on as usual.

Two boys approached Flint. They brought a "chit" from a neighbor, eight or nine miles away, asking if they might be allowed to use Flint's corn huller. He led them to the huller, a crude machine with exposed gears and a hand crank, and left them at their task. We remained to watch proceedings. One boy seized the crank, gave it a whirl and then stuck his fingers into the gears. When they had made a revolution, and come clear again, the three middle fingers of his right hand were practically off. He did not seem to feel any pain. On the contrary, surprise was written on his features, which shaded into fear at the thought that possibly he had

damaged the machine. We pushed him down to the back of the house.

"The silly cuckoo has cut his hand off in the corn huller," I yelled to Flint. Instantly he rushed out of the house, fetched the boy a terrific kick on the breach, as Dr. Johnson would say, and shouted, "You complete ass, I'll learn you to come over here and wreck our corn huller." The boy stood there in an ashy fright, his hand hanging down in a way I did not care to look at. Then Flint took him in charge kindly, sat him in a chair and, with the assistance of my son, performed some rough surgery. I proceeded behind the barn to look at the view, and wondered why it was I didn't have any appetite for dinner. When the boy got up from the chair, he left the three fingers of his right hand behind him. They were gone, vanished into the air—and I wouldn't wonder if to this day he speculated vaguely as to where he had mislaid them. Now Flint ordered an ox-wagon and sent him miles away to a hospital, where for a few weeks he lived a life of cleanliness and comfort such as he had never known before. I began to realize that we were on the edge of the world. Last night the blood of a porcupine and the dogs had sprinkled this same small

yard. Now it was human blood. This bit of ground appeared to get plenty of libations.

The fingerless one rode away in his ox-wagon, nestled luxuriously on a wisp of straw. We never saw him again.

I requested Abdallah to bring me a tin of cigarettes. The desire for a narcotic was strong within me. As we sat idly in the sun and smoked, the three giggly females, with the balloon sleeves and serpentine ear lobes, passed on some errand.

"Stop them," I asked of Flint. "Let's get to the bottom of this ear lobe business. What is it all about? What good does it do?"

He ranged them in a row in front of us. "It's symbolical of refinement and caste," he said, "same as when Chinese women deform their feet or our women affect the wasp-like waist. This ear lobe stretching is just as useless as any other self-inflicted deformity, unless the idea was to insert a small box in the loop to hold tobacco or snuff."

He unhooked a lobe and let it hang, unlovely and snakelike. "That's a wonderful idea," I replied. "No clothes—no pockets, so they convert the ear lobe into a kind of bastard vanity bag." I handed him the tin of cigarettes. "See if you can

We shoved a tin of cigarettes
her ear lobe. Though
giggly, the service improv
once.

shove this in, and we'll prove that the ear lobe can be useful as well as ornamental." The tin was probably about three inches in diameter. For a moment he struggled, but shove as he would, it refused to fit. It was like trying to push a grand piano through a transom.

It was obvious that the girl was deeply mortified. Her feminine pride was cut to the quick—as a lobist she was a failure. She addressed a few halting words to Flint. "You've caught her on an off day," he translated. "Her elasticity is at a low ebb. But give her an hour alone with her stretcher, and that cigarette tin will fit like a sword in its scabbard."

She withdrew. When she returned a little later, sure enough the tin slipped in as though it was greased. She was delighted. So were we, though why the fact that we had been able to shove a tin of cigarettes through the ear lobe of a young African damsel should cause us such particular satisfaction I'm unable to explain. In the future the cigarettes were always passed by the ear lobe method—cigarettes in one ear, matches in the other. This left both hands free. From then on the service was irreproachable. It was very hilarious—but irreproachable. On leaving, when I gave her a pair

of empty tins for use as ear-rings no one could have been more delighted.

This concluded our first morning on the Farm. Already I felt old in the way of the land.

VII

ABOUT 3.30 we gathered in the yard by common consent. It was the focal point from which all adventure started. "Now, we'll go after wart hogs," said Flint. "I go after them every afternoon. It's one of my duties. Either the wart hogs have got to be exterminated, or we have got to quit farming. They're quite Etonian—they think our patches of wheat and corn are 'playing fields.' "

On our appearance, dogs had sprouted from the earth, mad with excitement. They were canine lunatics. The air was filled with doggish frenzy. One would think they were about to enjoy a special treat, rather than go through a rather dangerous daily grind. There were six of them, ranging from heavy-weights, tipping the scales at one hundred and thirty-five pounds, to fly-weights of not more than ten or twelve pounds. Their business in life was fighting, and their appearance advertised

their profession. An eye was missing, an ear, or the entire end of a black nose that had been poked into a hole where it didn't belong. There were terrible scars, like sabre wounds, from the tusks of the wart hogs, embroidered with borders of bumps and bruises from less robust enemies. It was the business of these four-legged gladiators to inflict death by violence, and so it could almost be called an irony of fate when in the end some error of eye or judgment occurred that dealt them in turn a rather ghastly annihilation. But they met death stoically, returning to the charge again and again, until the light in their eyes grew dim and the world they knew faded into nothingness. Their veins were charged with fighting blood, undiluted by effeminacy.

We set forth full of eagerness, my son, Flint and I, followed by a "boy" called Kipsong, barefooted and robed in nothing but the black integument in which he was born. From the way it glistened in the sun's rays, it must have been recently oiled and polished. It shone like the coach work of a Rolls Royce.

A few hundred yards from the house we were surrounded by game; graceful oribi and reed buck

encircled us, while on the horizon, herds of zebra, hartebeeste and topi grazed contentedly. But our mission concerned wart hogs alone. Now, from behind an ant hill a quarter of a mile away, waddled a stout and snobbish looking specimen. We attempted our first stalk. The dogs were held in the background, to be unleashed at the proper moment. On the whole, this stalk could not be regarded as a complete success. Either there were too many of us, or we were too self-conscious—I know I felt very much in evidence as we stole forward, with the object of intruding on the unsuspecting animal's privacy. In thirty seconds our efforts at secrecy had degenerated into sheer burlesque. A couple of inebriated paper-hangers would have been far quieter and much more graceful. We floundered forward. Flint motioned violently for silence. Then we proceeded to tiptoe—and one of us tiptoed into an ant bear hole. "To Hell with this," said Flint and turned the dogs loose. Action followed immediately.

Like a shot the pig was off, its ratty tail standing straight in the air. Like another shot, the dogs were after it, the heavy-weights soon trailing behind, for the pace was vicious. Kipsong zipped after the

dogs. In spirit he was one of them. His bare feet thudding over the sun-baked ground threw little spurts of dust into the air. Neck and neck with the straining hounds he ran, and if he did not step the first mile in well under five minutes it was only because he lost a little time hurdling ant hills.

"Don't run," said Flint. "They'll chase him into an ant bear hole and watch 'till we come up. He had such a start though I guess he's gone." As far as the eye could see, the ground was pimpled with ant hills, and honey-combed with ant bear holes. Running was an adventure, walking a grab-bag of surprises.

"This zoology is queer stuff," I remarked to Flint, as we hurried after them. "First come the ants, then the ant bears, looking for ants, and after they have clawed the landscape full of holes, the wart hogs appear looking for holes. No holes, no wart hogs; no ant bears, no holes; no ants, no ant bears. So the ants are really responsible for the wart hogs."

"Possibly," he replied. "The wart hogs would certainly move to a country where there was cover, if they didn't have ant bear holes to fall into."

"I suppose that goes for me, too," I remarked.

He never directly referred to that first stalk in any other way. Nice fellow, Flint.

Pig, dogs and Kipsong, after dodging dizzily this way and that, vanished over the horizon. "That one's gone," he said. "But behind that ant hill there's a very fair reed buck. Eighty yards. When he steps out, drop him. We've got to have meat for the table. That's another of my chores."

In an instant he appeared, browsing daintily in the slanting rays of the afternoon sun. Every hair in his sleek coat stood out clearly, even his muzzle showed moist and black as he raised his head, from time to time, for a look around. I fired. For an instant he pricked up his ears. Then he went on browsing.

"You must have gone a mile over him," whispered Flint.

"I'll try and make the next miss a mere matter of yards," I whispered back.

Twice more I fired into a vacuum.

"Maybe I could make him move if I yelled at him," I said. "He looks like a pet. What's his name?"

I surrendered the gun to my son now, and Cornwallis at Yorktown could not have breathed a

greater sigh of relief when he handed over his sword and called it a day, but the reed buck did not wait for the completion of the formalities, uttering a sharp whistle he vanished.

"Something's gone wrong with the sights on that gun," I threw off as a suggestion.

"A fellow reacts differently to a live target than he does to a rock," replied Flint. "Don't worry. You'll miss lots of them. I've seen Bisley shots come down here and make hard work of hitting an elephant at twelve yards."

"I can understand that," I responded. "Their minds were probably not on their shooting."

We caught up with the dogs and Kipsong, who looked quite sheepish and somewhat winded. The same process was now repeated, except that this time the pig was started at fairly close range. Away it went like a rocket, the dogs behind it yelling like demons. It lost ground for a hundred yards, then stopped abruptly, reversed itself and backed down an ant bear hole; a most ridiculous and clumsy proceeding.

"For Heaven sakes, why doesn't it go down headfirst?" I asked.

"Well, would you go down a hole headfirst, and

leave the most defenseless portion of your anatomy exposed?" said Flint.

"If you put it that way, maybe the pig has had more experience going down holes than I have," I answered. "That is, up to date."

On arriving at the spot where the pig had vanished we found, to Flint's disgust, that there were half a dozen holes apparently connected by labyrinthine, underground passages.

"What now?" I enquired.

"Ordinarily we stamp on the ground over the hole," he answered. "The pig rushes out. Then the dogs have him in no time. But this one's no good. There must be a regular rathskeller down there."

He stamped over the various holes, while we crouched with clenched teeth awaiting the rush of the tusker. Not even a field mouse stuck its head out. Then he tried jumping up and down over the holes. No pig. Then he tried jumping up and down over the holes with bad language. No pig. Then we all danced up and down over an area one hundred yards square. The ground continued to remain pigless, but the dogs enjoyed it. We tried to smoke him out. What didn't go in our eyes went

into the hole, but by this time the pig had his gas mask on and no doubt had gone to sleep. Then we went away from there telling each other what a low down pig it was anyway.

A hundred yards farther on, as we skirted a bunch of grass, out jumped a large tusker, and ran between our legs. He gave us no warning, which was rather discourteous of him. His eyes were small and red, and a fleeting glance revealed him about the size of a small giraffe. His tusks, wicked, yellow-looking, bits of ivory, stood out of his snout like a large sized pair of snickersnees.

Then, for the third time that afternoon, everybody went crazy. As they streaked away in pursuit, the dogs howled in an unpoetical frenzy. Kipsong, after them, uttered banshee cries and bounded into the air as he ran. Flint, with the bloodlust in his eye, danced up and down, and begged us pathetically to run, run, before we missed it all. We stood there, with bent knees and mouths opened, in a manner ideally suited for fly catching. Then the frenzy caught us, too. It was a contagious frenzy, and we started to run. At the end of fifty yards, we were exhausted. At the end of a hundred, we sat down. Flint ran back, and relieved us of our guns.

"It's the altitude," he shouted. "You're eight thousand feet high."

"At least," we gasped, "and we've outgrown our strength. Each of our feet weighs six thousand pounds."

Suddenly it occurred to me that for the last few seconds Flint had been yelling at the top of his lungs. As soon as that pig appeared, he began shouting the simplest directions, as though the world was deaf. While as for us, we had yodeled back our answers 'til the welkin rang. Later we came to recognize this as the hunting frenzy. It was always so when the battles were on. Even the most anæmic types did it. A man might look as though he wouldn't talk back to a sheep, but turn him loose in the vortex of an African hunt and he'd yell like a fishmonger. I'm afraid we swore, too; strange, unfamiliar oaths. Often I found myself wondering in what thieves' kitchen I learned some of the phrases I used. I never remembered hearing them before. They seemed to originate spontaneously. The restraints and inhibitions of civilization gradually slipped away to leave revealed our primeval, savage husks. As was the case with the wart hogs, who automatically adapted themselves

to their environment, so we too, with surprising ease, relinquished the habits and customs it had taken years to form, and went down our holes backwards.

Our famished lungs labored back to normal, while we watched the dogs at their sinister work. They pursued a definite, systematic method, deadly and inevitable in its result. It never varied, and in the course of time we saw a score of pigs dispatched by the same relentless strategy. There were six dogs. As the pig fled the two smallest soon out-distanced the heavy-weights and opened hostilities with a series of vicious snaps on the unprotected flanks of the enemy. For an instant, the tusker paused to lunge viciously at these skirmishers. This form of counter-attack was easy to dodge, and in the end proved disastrous to the pig. Precious time was lost, the heavier dogs drew level with him and then, as he lunged to the left in a desperate effort to reach his small antagonists, massive jaws clamped his right ear in a vice-like grip. As he turned to the right, to meet this new danger, his left ear was seized in other jaws no less vice-like. Now he was powerless; his yellow tusks useless. At this point, the two canine middle weights entered the fray to

seize a hind leg apiece. In a trice he was ham strung. His annihilation was then but a matter of seconds. It was irrevocable. The two smallest dogs yielded place to their larger confreres, to yell and dance like mad around the mêlée, their small chops covered with bloodly foam, their eyes like dancing balls of fire. They were fulfilling their destinies. It was like wine to them.

Now this particular pig, and all the other pigs that died this way, was no sooner seized by the dogs than he uttered the most terrible screams that ever tortured a hunter's ear. They were human in quality, and rose to a climax expressing the quintessence of agony. Then, they trailed away pathetically and were still. It was all over. The pit of my stomach felt queer.

"It's gruesome," I murmured.

"Don't forget, either they go or we go," said Flint, "and this is one sure way of getting them. Also they die as they live—piggishly. They make a song about it. If anyone of those dogs got done in, you'd never hear a murmur out of him. It would give you a bad five minutes, if you looked into his eyes, but he'd die like a hero—and lick your hand to the last."

"Well," I thought, "I suppose civilization is to blame for this. It keeps sticking its nose in where it isn't wanted, and somebody always has to pay."

In a few minutes another pig was started, and the tragedy re-enacted with the same methodical precision.

The sun had set, to be succeeded by a wistful African after-glow rich in reds, yellows and burnt umbers. The stars began to appear. In the distance the protagonists of the night began to rehearse their familiar parts, at first rather diffidently. Soon the chill air would reverberate with sound.

I shot at a vague shape as we stumbled through the dusk towards the house, and was almost willing to swear that I heard a mocking laugh as it disappeared into the darkness.

We trudged into the back yard. The heads of the dogs hung low with fatigue. Warm lights shone through the windows, while odors, rich in promise, were wafted past us on a vagrant breeze. We entered the house. Dinner was ready.

VIII

IT was six o'clock the following morning. It always seemed to be six o'clock the following morning. These Africans must have imbibed powerful infusions of owl's blood in their tea. From sundown until noon they were antagonistic to sleep, then it was no longer considered effeminate to relax. As I say, it was six o'clock the following morning. I started to leave the house on some trifling errand. "Hey, come back here, you blond Eskimo," old man Leathers yelled after me. "Come back here, and put on your sun helmet, and don't you ever let me catch you going out again without it."

"But the sun isn't even up yet," I expostulated.

"Don't make any difference, wear your sun helmet," he growled. "I've seen these hardy fellows before. The sun never affects them. No! It's all bunk about the actinic rays. Yes! And what happens to them?"

"What?" I asked. It seemed indicated.

"Looney," he answered cryptically. "If they're not all dead by now, they're chattering like blue monkeys in some quiet retreat. I've seen them get sun stroke at midnight. I've seen them sit under a tin roof and laugh at the sun—then start jibbering. The sun's all over. It's everywhere. I've been touched myself—but I got over it," he added hastily. "This is equatorial Africa. Don't monkey with it. You've got a head like butter—I mean we all have. It'll melt. Wear your hat. Continue to wear your hat. Wear it from morning 'til night. Wear it from night 'til morning. Wear it Sundays, week days and Yiddish holidays. Wear your hat!" A boy approached and offered him some tea. Just as the cup reached his lips, he looked over the rim at me and mumbled: "Wear your hat!" He sat the cup down, and gazed out the window, meditatively. A small herd of topi were peacefully grazing across the small valley at the back of the house — "What the Hell do you think a hat's for anyway?" he remarked, and strolled off toward the mealie shed.

I turned to my son, who had entered briskly during this conversation. "Don't you let me catch you

again without your hat," I roared at him. "Wear your hat! You pink-eyed Arabian sea turtle! Do you want to start jibbering on my hands?" A few minutes later I noticed him in the yard trying to kick one of the smaller dogs, but the dog thought he was only playing.

Hat wearing now became a mania with me, and I never went far without my spine pad either. I wasn't going to start doing monkey jumps if such simple precautions were all that were necessary. The sun that I had always considered one of my warmest friends at home had suddenly developed "vertical rays", and other sinister peculiarities, and become my deadliest enemy. It was hard to understand.

In a brief twenty-four hours I'd lived a year, and felt as soft as putty in the hands of Fate. If an old timer had advised it, I would have worn a skillet on my head. Even a week later, in the Rift Valley, my garb was orthodox. It might have been termed abbreviated—but it was orthodox. As a rule, in that locality, a cork helmet, flannel shirt, heavy woolen socks and hobnailed boots satisfied my modesty. I shed my trousers. It was cooler. Show me the man who does not long to roam in a

land where the formality of pantaloons may be dispensed with! Trousers? Pooh! Mere scabbards that stultify man's original dower—the free and untrammeled use of his pedal extremities.

But I had my authority for such a radical innovation. It was thus that Selous, the greatest hunter of them all used to dress—or rather undress. If he had gone naked I know I would have tried it too.

Mr. Leathers sent "chits" to several neighbors, inviting them to assemble at his house Sunday morning for a "drive." These drives took place at spasmodic intervals—in fact, whenever anyone felt moved to organize one. Each guest brought his own "boys" with him, and on such an occasion two hundred vociferous savages might squat in the host's back yard like a pack of beagles eager to have their leashes slipped. On this particular "drive," Flint acted as Master of the Hounds. We set out blithely about ten o'clock, seven guns strong.

A dry swamp or "flei," two hundred yards in width, was selected after a walk of some miles. The "boys" deployed into a line that stretched straight across it; entering its tall dry grass, they wended their invisible way down its length, beating

the matted vegetation with short sticks, and uttering whoops and yells. Dividing into two groups, we proceeded along each edge. As the reed buck, bush buck, duikers, or what not, broke cover to escape from the beaters we bombarded them. They were fleet animals, forty or fifty pounds in weight, and some of the rifle shooting that took place seemed nothing short of phenomenal—to me at any rate. Even my son knocked them down in their tracks. Personally, I had borrowed a shotgun and a fair supply of shells loaded with buckshot. But, although I fired a number of times, to my certain knowledge I hit nothing. However, the shooting was somewhat promiscuous, so that more or less vagueness existed as to hits and misses. This was a great comfort to me. I was beginning to develop a feeling of strong animosity toward firearms. "I suppose," I reflected, "as long as I can't hit an antelope, I'll be the bright little fellow who'll bump off one of these beaters." There were so many of them, and the grass, eight or ten feet high, hid them so completely, it would have been the easiest thing in the world to mistake one for a reed buck, or a black leopard. Nearly every drive produced a casualty or two. On the last, a large "boy,"

with an egg-shaped head, had had four buck shot bounced off his skull. He was annoyed. He did not mind getting shot at, he said, but he wished the bwanas would be careful where they hit him. It always gave him a headache to get hit in the head.

We drove three "fleis" in this manner, with a bag of eight reed buck and three bush buck. Then we drew out into the open veldt for the final "round-up." The boys were marched off in a loose column, with Flint at the head, and the guns spread out at intervals of four or five hundred yards. This single column was eventually looped around, until it formed a complete circle almost a mile in diameter. Within this enclosure several hundred head of game was surrounded as it grazed. Then the ring was slowly contracted. As it narrowed, the frightened animals made wild dashes for freedom. This was the signal for the opening of hostilities. By threes and fours the game was dropped to earth. It was a ruthless proceeding, and I can find little to commend in it now. At that moment I found even less, for the tighter the circle was drawn the more desperate became the rush of the trapped animals, and the more erratic the gun fire. Soon the circumference of our circle was so contracted that we shot

directly across it into one another. It was only necessary for me to see two bullets plow up the ground not ten yards away from my feet to become a complete fanatic against this form of sport. I take a great pride in my feet, and don't like to have them shot at. The worst of it was, once having started to play, it was impossible to throw down one's racquet and walk off the court. That would have been sheer suicide. It seemed to me that my son, who was now only a couple of hundred yards on my right, was deliberately trying to wing me. Everybody was taking shots at me. They seemed to think I was a reed buck. I yelled, and shot my gun off in the air, and jumped up and down and waved my arms to let them know that I was not an antelope. But they only took it as a symbol of reciprocal insanity and jumped up and down and waved their arms back, and then shot their guns off at me again. The sayings of famous men in tense moments flashed across my mind: "Don't give up the ship." "More grape, Captain Bragg!" "Don't fire until you can see the whites of their eyes!" "Kiss me, Harding!" They seemed so comforting and meaty. I pictured myself stretched on the sward, riddled with bullets and remarking: "Please

pass the sponge cake," or some simple phrase that would ring down the centuries. Then Flint blew a whistle. The round-up was over. One can never know what sweet music may be blown on a cheap policeman's whistle, until he has heard it under such circumstances.

When the turmoil quieted down, about thirty-five head of game lay stretched out on the grass in neat rows. Then, as is usual among hunters, we boasted of what we had done: "I knocked over twenty-eight head myself," one man remarked. "Twenty-one was my bag, my eye was off," said another. "I'm positive of eight. Four others I'm not sure of," I added. It seemed perfectly safe, the shooting had been so promiscuous. And so it went on. Later I calculated that four hundred and ten head of game had been shot, if we were to believe our guest's statements rather than our eyes.

The bag was divided, the beaters getting a fair share as compensation for the risks they had run. On that basis, I figured I was entitled to about half of it myself, but waived my rights. Now we adjourned to the Leathers for a light lunch, or a heavy dinner, according to the point of view. By the middle of the afternoon life on the farm was pro-

ceeding as usual. And that is the last round-up I ever attended or ever expect to attend.

The conversation at lunch turned on the question of what a safe country Africa was to live in. One and all these natives lauded their adopted land in this connection. To be sure, Smith had just died of fever; Jones had just been gnawed by a lion; Terwhilliger had just been stepped on by an elephant; a buffalo had just tossed Barnes twenty feet into the air. Such things as these only proved the rule to these men; and, while I was willing to admit, from what I had seen and heard, that Africa was doubtless a safe place, it looked to me as though the death rate was about one apiece all around. From this moment, I decided to be careful. Even a little more careful than I would be in New York or Paris.

IX

AFTER lunch I determined to try an experiment. I felt that the only way I could reach terms of real intimacy with my rifle was to take it out by myself and commune with it. Something told me that if I wasn't hurried or bustled I could come to a complete understanding with this fickle tube of steel. I was certain that there were hidden cells in me that would guarantee straight shooting. All I had to do was to find the cells. The memory of the way I had failed to miss that rock persisted in lingering. It fanned my desire for further experimenting.

"Do you need any more meat?" I asked Flint.

"We always need meat," he answered.

"Well," I said. "I think I'll stroll out and knock something on the head before dinner."

"All right," he replied. "I'll send a boy with you."

"I don't want any boy," I answered. "I'll only stroll over the veldt in sight of the house."

Old man Leathers, who had seemed asleep in his chair, opened one eye and remarked: "You take a boy. Never, as long as you're in Africa, go out without a boy. Do you want to get yourself killed, and give us no end of trouble finding you? Take a boy. Fellows that know wilds like bush whackers go out and get themselves lost in a patch no bigger than a mignonette bed. Take a boy!"——

"Yes," I broke in. "I guess I'll take a boy. If I shoot anything, he can come back and get some porters, and if we get caught in the dark, he'll get me home."

"He'll bring you back like a homing pigeon," said Flint.—"You'll only be gone an hour—at most."

About four o'clock I set out, followed by a black dwarf resembling nothing so much as the spawn of an ape. An indescribable spirit of freedom and adventure filled my bosom. I was treading the African veldt alone for the first time. The boy carried my .275 Rigby, and in my pocket jingled twenty rounds of ammunition; the most comforting coin one can so jingle in this prehistoric land, provided that in it there are no counterfeits.

A quarter of a mile from the house we mounted

a slight rise of ground, from which our vision swept the plateau in all directions. There, sitting on his heels, a small native boy watched a herd of cows. It was a lovely bucolic picture.

"Yama," I said to him; this being one of the half a dozen swahili words I knew, meaning "meat."

He said: "Jambo, bwana," meaning "greetings, worshipful master." It was really a most delightful, intelligent conversation. I've heard less interesting exchanges right in my own home town. Then, he pointed with a blade of grass down a shallow ravine and said: "Kongoni," meaning "there's a nice hartebeeste down there."

"Missouri," I answered, meaning "very good, my lad." It was a strange language. I had always understood, up to my arrival in Africa, that Missouri meant something very different. I cast my eye along his blade of grass with eagerness, and there, sure enough, right on the edge of the cows and about to mingle and chew the cud of friendship with them, stood a hartebeeste. "Now," I thought. "Be calm, and imagine he is a rock." I fired. Down he fell. My boy uttered a savage cry of satisfaction. I was not annoyed myself, for to take out twenty cartridges and return with

nineteen and a kongoni was first register shooting. He had fallen in some grass. We approached leisurely, full of the consciousness of work well done. When we were about ten yards from where he lay, he jumped up and ran away, but one of his legs hung limp. In other respects he seemed as right as rain. Now followed a most agonizing two hours; the stern chase of a wounded animal. He must be brought down, that I knew; even if he had to be pursued to Beersheba. But I never expected to engage in a game of tag that covered so much territory. He was a will-o'-the-wisp, an ephemeral wraith, dancing on before me, always just out of reach.

At the start I was more or less optimistic. "Next shot will get him," I kept predicting, only to find it necessary to stalk him yet another quarter of a mile.

The kongoni fled, with incredible fleetness, to an area of burnt over ground. Soon I found that the closest he would permit me to approach was about four hundred yards, so that was my range. A puff of dust, as the bullet struck, gave me my relation to the target, and a very unflattering relationship it was. At the sound of the gun, the

kongoni invariably resumed his flight. For two solid hours this continued. At times he wouldn't even wait for the report of the gun, but just as I'd flung myself on my stomach behind an ant-hill, and was lining my sights on him like a civil engineer, he would throw up his head and disappear. And a man lying in this fashion behind an ant-hill, without a good reason, looks ridiculous. Several times he left me sitting on the plain just as I was getting ready to shoot, for I was trying shots from all positions. This makes one feel even sillier. Also nobody can sit down on the ground tailor-fashion, and get up gracefully—not even a tailor. My twenty cartridges were reduced to ten, eight, seven. The ashes and cinders of the burnt ground filled my throat. I was covered with soot from head to foot, but the kongoni continued to remain in the open so he could watch every move I made. Consequently I had to watch every move he made and, as I ran, the earth beneath my feet was a dark mystery. I did not blame myself, therefore, for falling into seven ant bear holes. Each successive crash made me angrier, however, and more grimy. The afternoon slipped away. The sable curtains of night began to fall. Only two cart-

ridges were left. Then, as he proceeded up a shallow gully, I raced around to cut him off. I was reaching the end of my rope, as well as my ammunition. Panting, I sank behind an ant-hill, murmured a short prayer, and loosed my nineteenth shot into the gloom. The kongoni wheeled about twice and went down. I don't remember ever experiencing such mingled emotions as now filled me. They were divided between strong pity for the animal, and a savage exultation in what I had succeeded in doing to him. This emotional chaos was augmented by an overpowering desire to lie down somewhere.

I approached and leaned the rifle, containing my twentieth and last cartridge, against him. From somewhere out of the gloom appeared the boy, grinning and grimacing most unpleasantly. Now I examined my first hartebeeste at close range. The most striking thing about him was the conformation of his face. It was ridiculously long, and his short horns, starting straight up, then bending sharply back, accentuated its length. Its expression was one of perpetual dazed astonishment. His eyes were high in his head. The length of his nose was exaggerated until it seemed it must be

made of papier-maché, stuck on for comic purposes. He moved slightly. I motioned the boy to indicate the most approved anatomical spot for a finishing shot—my twentieth. He placed a finger in the center of his own black forehead with a sinister leer. I fired. The hartebeeste collapsed, a lifeless mass. Then the boy, with great exposure of yellow teeth, conveyed the idea by signs that he was going back to the farm for porters, and merged noiselessly with the shadows. I was alone.

The situation failed to appeal to me in the slightest. It was dark now. The sun had set badly in billowing and gloomy-looking black clouds. The dead kongi and I were lone companions on the mysterious veldt. I had exploded my twentieth cartridge. All that remained to do was sit and wait. Even the corpse of the poor animal was more or less of a comfort. At least it afforded a connecting link with reality. Far off in the night a hyena howled. Near at hand I was conscious of faint sighs and rustlings, vague, inchoate whisperings, as though the inky darkness were populated by phantoms. Suddenly, something sneezed a few yards away. It was a moist sneeze, followed by a thudding of zebra hooves that faded into the dis-

tance like faint thunder. A jackal uttered a sharp bark directly behind me. I turned quickly to face the sound and, again behind me, some other four-legged spirit uttered a gurgling cough—a sort of anticipatory regurgitation. Everything was behind me. Soon I was slowly pivoting like the vanes of a windmill on the banks of a Dutch canal. The wail of the hyena, that had been so faint at first, now rent the air within a stone's throw. I could actually smell his musky taint. Though he did not howl again, I knew he was out there waiting. In fact, I was surrounded by a living ring of night prowlers. I could feel it. As clearly as though it were broad daylight, I could see them performing their stealthy patrols, or sitting on their haunches waiting. That was what made me nervous,—the idea of this relentless waiting—waiting.

Suddenly, I was conscious of a deep labored sigh close at hand, followed by faint, fluttering breaths. Gradually they grew stronger, more regular, until full and deep, a powerful respiration was functioning in the darkness not a yard away from me. With a start that raised my diaphragm about four inches, I realized that the kongoni was alive again.

I'd shot him through the brain. He'd lain there dead. Now he was alive again. It couldn't be. I was having some form of Zoological delirium tremens. But there he lay in the darkness, drawing in deep lungsful of oxygen. He raised his head and looked me square in the face. It was not a look of reproach—it was a bewildered, idiotic look. Vocalized, it said: "Where am I?"—the eternal question of returning consciousness. I moved. His head followed me. I went around him. Slowly his head turned, keeping me constantly under the spell of its fixed regard.

It was ridiculous, absurd. The strange sounds of my other night companions were forgotten. With calm dignity, the kongoni held up his head. Shoulder to shoulder we gazed fixedly at each other,—he became inscrutable—I, an open book—for I was scared. Would the porters never come! Nobody ever comes at moments like these. Thus we sat for an hour. Then a group of boys with a lantern appeared from nowhere. One of them led a mule. In the light of the lantern, the kongoni regarded us calmly, resigned to whatever fate held in store. I mounted the donkey, and left him to the boys. I never wanted to see or hear of him

again. I felt uncanny—as if I'd just committed a murder at a spiritualistic séance.

It was after seven. The house could not be more than a mile away in a straight line. The thing was to find the straight line. But then, as Flint had said, "these natives can see in the dark." This might have been true, but on this occasion they seemed to be afflicted with the blind staggers. It started to rain, a drenching, tropical deluge. In two minutes I was soggy. In two more saturated. With one boy at the donkey's head and another at his tail, we set out. Two and a half hours later we reached the house. Two hours were spent going in circles; half an hour in reaching the house. Never before have I described so many circles on an ass's back. The native homing pigeons became so lost they didn't know what day of the week it was. They got mad and swore at each other—at least it sounded like swearing—and from the heart. Then they compounded their differences, and made another circle. Several times I thought they were going to abandon both the ass and me. But they promptly placed such primitive instincts under control. Evidently Flint was a fanatic about having his asses returned, and had very definitely im-

pressed this on their prehistoric minds. After two hours and a half of this, we saw the lights of the house right under our feet. Everybody stood at the door to greet us. They were much concerned. They ought to have been. I looked like something that had been dragged up from the bottom of an aquarium. I felt like a trout. Water was running from me in little jets and cascades. Fifteen minutes after I entered the house I was still cascading.

"I don't mind getting lost by these natives that can see in the dark and are full of sixth senses and all that," were the first words I said to Flint. "All I want to know is, how can you shoot a kongoni in the brain and have him come to life again?" and I described what had taken place.

"You shot him between the eyes, didn't you?" he replied. "Well, a kongoni's brain isn't between his eyes. It's half way down his nose. You went over the top of it. Only stunned him. He came to again—that's all."

"Oh!" I answered.—"That's all!" and went in to change my clothes.

X

AS a matter of fact," said Flint, "an animal is never dead in this part of the world until his pelt is nailed up on the barn door."

We were on our way to Hobson's Choice with a lightly loaded ox-wagon trundled by half a span of oxen. It was the fruition of the three day safari idea; a miniature hegira to break us in to life under African stars. Our preparations had been unimpressive. Tossing aboard a few supplies, our bed rolls, a log or two for fire-wood, and an abundance of ammunition for me, Flint told off half a dozen boys as a retinue, and remarked: "Let's drift." As though exercising a traditional right, the dogs at once deployed in skirmish formation.

Lazily we creaked and jolted over the level table-land, one moment fenced in only by the distant horizon, the next, as we lumbered through a shallow depression, circumscribed visually to a mat-

ter of yards. About us, in such grouping as suited each individual whim, the game pursued its primeval devices. We were heading toward the sky-line, vague of purpose, short circuited from the world, prepared to live on the land and combat our environment. Like a worn out garment, we discarded civilization with but few conscious regrets and became elemental. Prose is far too brusque and nervous to express the vivid sense of tranquillity that enveloped us at this moment.

Flint, my son and I strolled a hundred yards ahead of the lumbering wagon. "No sir," he continued. "Never take it for granted an animal is dead in these parts. On the Nzoya I trap quite a few leopards. Three weeks ago I got a good one—by the way, I'd like to make you a present of the skin—I came up to within a few feet of the trap, and gave it the .303 right between the eyes. Of course, it dropped dead in its tracks. I had two boys with me. They cut a pole, tied its legs together, slipped the pole through, and each took an end on his shoulder. The leopard hung with his back to the ground, and his head just abaft the buttocks of the first boy. My work seemed over, so I ambled along behind them looking about. This is an interesting

country to amble in. Five minutes later I heard a yell from one of the boys. It was brimful of feeling. When I came up with them, the leopard was as much alive as the day he was born. To show his resentment at the handling he had received, he had fastened his fangs into the nearest suitable object, unfortunately, this was the bare posterior of the first boy. Having locked his teeth well into it, he settled down to await developments. There they were, the leopard helpless with its feet tied, and the boy half delirious from pain and fright. A dramatic picture, viewed from the sidelines, but from the boy's position, a nasty predicament entirely devoid of poetry. They were thrashing around so, I couldn't shoot. At length, I managed to stick the gun into the leopard's face and kill him for the second time. I was curious to know what had happened, so skinned him out on the spot—the skulls of leopard and lion are very flat you know. I found my first bullet had not penetrated this one's skull. Just slipped over the top and stunned him. Of course he came to in time, just as your kongoni did, very much alive to the indignities he had suffered."

"And the boy?" I enquired.

"Still in the hospital. He lost a good deal of

meat from that portion of his anatomy not generally referred to in public, but the wound is local and he'll be as good as new in no time."

"They seem treacherous, ruthless, unscrupulous beasts," I suggested.

"They are," he answered. "But every animal in Africa will run, if he gets a chance. Unless you corner them, harass them, devil them, tease them, or fall all over them unexpectedly, their whole aim in life is to show you a clean pair of heels. The animals that charge 'buri'—instantly and without warning—are as rare as prohibitionists that don't drink. This is common knowledge."

The hours passed. For us time did not exist. Crystal clear, the atmosphere revealed a vast world in which each detail stood out with stereoptic distinctness. We were adrift in a vast solitude, but provisions in the form of steaks, chops and tenderloins frolicked on all sides. The dogs sported at our heels. Even the boys seemed to feel that the weights had been removed from the safety-valves of their lives, and vented their exuberance in loud laughter over incomprehensible, savage jokes.

We ran down a couple of pigs, and stopped at a Dutchman's farm for lunch. It sounds as though

there was a subtle inference here, but none is intended. Two or three rooms of wattles and mud comprised his homestead. Here we outspanned for a couple of hours—or, in plain English, unhitched the oxen. With courtly hospitality Spitzmiller and his son gave us tea in cracked and assorted receptacles. At once, the conversation fell into local channels; crops, game, boys, curious happenings. Everybody we met had a fondness for curious happenings. If there weren't any available at the moment, perfectly normal occurrences were taken and made curious. Spitzmiller told of riding his push-bicycle home one evening along a path and meeting a lion face to face ten feet away. The only thing he had to defend himself with was the bicycle bell and, inasmuch as the only way to defend oneself with a bicycle bell is to ring it, Spitzmiller rang it, and charged the lion. The lion never before having been charged by a bicycle bell, or even a bicycle, turned panicky and ran down the path like a driven sheep for half a mile. Then they came to a fork and parted company by mutual consent.

I remembered what Flint had said about animals always running away, but to me this seemed like

an extraordinary story. Later, I repeated it to another settler. "So that happened to him, did it?" he remarked with biting sarcasm. "Well, he's only the four hundred and eighty-second push-bicycle rider that it's happened to. That story is recited by every settler in Africa. Don't believe more than half of what you hear. Now I ride a push-bicycle myself. Not long ago I was in Uganda riding along a hard beaten path. I rounded a sharp bend, and ran right into a cow-elephant. I took one hand from the handle-bars, laid it on her ribs, and eased myself past her. Then I pedaled like the devil. She let out a scream and started to chase me. There was none of your damn bell ringing in this. At the end of a quarter of a mile, I knew that in another sixty seconds the race would be over. I could feel her old trunk reaching out for my coat tails. Just then I hit a place in the road where the rains had carved out a narrow channel a foot deep. I left the bicycle here, traveling thirty miles an hour, made eight complete revolutions in the air, and landed in a bush fifteen feet away. As far as the elephant was concerned, I had vanished into the air. She was the most puzzled cow I've ever seen. Simply couldn't figure it out. After fooling around

a few minutes, she gave it up and went off. Thought she'd been chasing a new kind of bird, I guess."

"But she found the bicycle, didn't she?" I enquired.

He reached in his vest pocket, and pulled out a well-worn nut. "Yes," he replied reminiscently. "She found the bicycle. When she got through with it, I picked it up and carried it home in my vest pocket. Here it is. I've carried it in my vest pocket ever since as a lucky piece."

The middle of the afternoon, we proceeded leisurely on our way. To remove any suspicion that we were competing with Time in the slightest degree, we creaked along at not more than a mile and a half an hour. Where we went, or when we got there, was a matter of little concern to us. The country became sterner, carved into shallow valleys and draws, with here and there rocky outcroppings. At sundown we camped on the edge of a dry creek bed. If such a thing were possible, the quantity and diversity of the game hereabouts exceeded anything we had yet seen. A vast synod of zebra, hartebeeste, reed buck, wart hogs, oribi and topi rumi-

nated in peaceful session as far as the eye could reach.

My gradual accumulation of self-confidence was seriously shaken during the afternoon. A reed buck vanished before my very eyes. Black magic could not have caused him to disappear more completely. He was lying down when I first saw him, taking his ease like a Turk, about a hundred yards away. To play fair and allow him to get up I moved slightly. For an instant my vision was obscured by an ant-hill. When I looked again he was gone. It was a flat, open spot, five hundred yards in diameter. Every living thing on it was visible, but the reed buck had evaporated. Then, half a mile away, melting into the distance, his fleeing form appeared. It was as though he had used a trap-door and made his exit through a subterranean passage. In effect, that was his strategy. The moment I lost sight of him he crawled on his stomach, Indian fashion, behind a low ridge of earth, followed it a hundred feet to where it joined a larger ridge high enough to afford cover, and so made his way to the sky line. I couldn't recall ever having heard of an animal with four legs behaving like a garter snake in order to elude an enemy, though I real-

ized that in this country that was no reason one wouldn't.

On the way to camp, I shot at an oribi. To my surprise I missed him.

"I'd like to see somebody hit what they were shooting at, just to see what the effect is," I remarked. The oribi was still regarding me reproachfully. Flint shot. The animal leapt into the air, and dropped behind an ant-hill. From behind the same ant-hill, an oribi immediately fled.

"Miss!" I said, not without satisfaction.

"No such thing," replied Flint. "I can tell when they're hit. That was another that ran."

We approached the mound, and looked behind it. There lay a dead oribi, sure enough.

"What did I tell you?" said Flint. He turned the body over. It was as stiff as a board, and had been dead for hours. He had made a miss, but on the exact spot the oribi had appeared to fall lay the body of another, dead from natural causes.

"Gosh! That's a coincidence," I said.

"It's worse than that," he answered. "It's rotten shooting."

Just before dusk Flint and I stood in a shallow valley. My son, with Kipsong as a handmaiden,

was the other side of its miniature divide, exploding cartridges. It sounded like drum fire. The game, resenting this intrusion on its privacy, filed past us in a long sinuous stream. A couple of hundred yards away a wart hog fell out of the parade, and made his way leisurely up a small, stony kopje.

"Get him," said Flint. He was always optimistic.

I fired and, to my amazement, as he reached the top of the mound, he fell. Though it was but a gaunt and bony wart hog, I was filled with a savage satisfaction. Flint, too, displayed the delight of a man who has made a wild prophecy which came true.

"I knew your eye would work in," he kept repeating.

We made the short climb and there he lay,—a very cadaverous old boar, with ancient yellow tusks much worn and nicked from countless belligerent gnashings. He appeared to be dead, so moving away a few feet we watched the game which continued to flow, an unending stream, through the little valley we had just left. A second later Flint yelled. With a start, I turned in time to see the old boar on his legs coming in my direction; tottery to

be sure, but none the less definitely. In his eye was a wicked look, and his snout was red with bloody foam. Only a second before he'd been dead. I couldn't get used to this kind of thing. My jaw dropped. I couldn't move. A one-legged man, with fallen arches, would have had to give me a nine yard handicap in a ten yard dash. A sizeable boulder was nearby. I dragged myself awkwardly to its highest pinnacle. Flint, a few feet away, seemed under the impression that I was doing all this for his special amusement. At the base of the boulder, the pig died—this time unequivocally. I reached for my rifle now, and gave him two shots in rapid succession.

"What's the use of shooting him after he's dead?" said Flint.

"I'm taking no more chances with these resurrections," I answered.

"Well," he continued. "You've made your first kill, and stood your first charge. It's your baptism. Now you can sign yourself 'Big Game Hunter.' You've got something to write home about." I never could tell whether he was kidding me or not.

When we returned to the ox-wagon, the boys had made camp. They had hacked some kindling wood

from the logs we carried and built up a cheerful blaze, about which they huddled, joking and chaffing each other. Supper was a gastronomic caress. For a short time we sat about and discussed the "States",—it was Flint's turn for information. Then, my son and I retired to the body of the wagon to lie on a mattress composed of strips of hide stretched across a frame. Above us, a piece of canvas laid on wooden bows, shut out the night. Flint slept under the wagon; the boys, a short distance away. They lay huddled together like sheep, for the sake of the warmth that arose from the close contact of their black bodies.

In the night it rained a little,—a pointless statement yet full of significance in view of what followed. The following morning passed calmly. It seemed a long interval to pass calmly. We almost yawned once or twice. Then I noticed my son acted rather jaded, as though he was laboring under a large load of unhappiness. His temperature was 101°. At once, I saw him jibbering with malaria; his youth ruined; his health wrecked, all through my criminal selfishness in bringing him to this darkest of all dark continents. We put him to bed in the wagon.

I had visualized my son gibber
with malaria, his health wrec

"It's nothing," said Flint. "He's eaten something."

"He's eaten everything," I replied. "Enough to founder himself, but it isn't that. He's done that so often I know the symptoms, his eyes start to bulge. This is different. It's nothing short of black water fever."

"Let him have a little shut eye," he continued soothingly, "and he'll be as right as rain in the morning."

As we were lunching, a good reed buck strolled into view a short distance away.

"We'll get him after a bit," Flint remarked casually; and, as though to accommodate us, the fond animal wandered aimlessly about in one spot until we'd finished.

"How about a little shut eye for ourselves now?" suggested Flint.

"That antelope won't wait forever," I answered.

"What else has he got to do?" he replied. So we lay down for an hour. At the end of that time, sure enough the idiot was still there patrolling up and down his beat like a mechanical toy.

"He's courting death," I remarked, and we set

out after him. It was an easy stalk; so easy that Flint and two Nandi came along and stood right behind me. Point blank I fired five shots at him. Then I got mad, picked up a clod of earth and hit him on the snout. He gave a whistle of rage, and ran away. All through the shooting he had fixed me with a disdainful eye, and sneered with his nostrils. As he vanished the two Nandi expectorated explosively.

"What's the matter with the grenadiers?" I asked, nodding toward them.

"That's their unelegant way of registering disapproval," Flint replied. "It's a native custom."

"Well, I hope they've come prepared to spend a vulgar afternoon," I answered.

We proceeded up the dry creek bed on which we were camped. Once the two Nandi stripped stark naked and led me up to a kongoni, stalking it beautifully. I missed him. They ejaculated a pint of saliva each, with a loud report, and put on their blankets and sandals. Then they drew Flint aside and held an animated conversation.

"They're fearful our safari will have to go on famine rations," he said. "I told them you broke five eggs running at one hundred yards, as a general

thing, but found it difficult shifting your target from eggs to live game. Don't let this discourage you. Everybody goes through it at first. You're doing fine!"

We sent the two boys back to the wagon, and proceeded up the creek bed. Soon, on a gentle slope, we saw six pigs rooting. One of them was the grandfather of all pigs. He looked as big as a muskox. The tusks protruding out of his upper jaw looked like a pair of scimitars three feet long. I wish the bead I drew on him could have been set to music. It would have made the "Maiden's Prayer" sound like ragtime. I fired. The bullet thudded home. But instead of dropping, the pig waddled away.

"Beat it," yelled Flint, "before he goes down a hole." We beat it, but the pig had vanished. Then we went hole hunting. I never before appreciated how much one hole looks like another. Flint kept repeating: "He's down here. No. He's down there. Cripes, he must be down one of them." Then some large drops of water fell out of the sky. "It's going to rain," he volunteered. Instantly the pig was forgotten. The heavens had become inky black. In two minutes it was raining in torrents. "We'll

bale up in those bushes," said Flint. "It won't last long."

The water ran off us in sheets. We made the bushes, and burrowed into them. Here we sat for an hour, chilled to the bone. Then Flint got an ague. I've seen men shiver before, but never with such a St. Vitus dance as this. It terrified me. "What if he shakes himself to pieces?" I thought. "I'm caught out here alone with a safari on my hands, and a boy with black water fever." I cursed Africa heartily.

"It's the result of fever," explained Flint apologetically, referring to his ague.

"You don't need to apologize," I told him. "Just try and not jump so. It makes me nervous."

One of the Nandi appeared from nowhere, and slid under the bushes with a few words to Flint. "He says the creek is filling up," he volunteered.

"Let's go," I suggested. "We can't get any wetter, unless we start absorbing it internally."

As we left the bushes, it began to hail, great jagged hail-stones that bounced off our helmets and left our heads ringing. We passed a hawk that had been hit by one and killed. Then a small sickly oribi dead from the same cause. An African

hail-stone is an evil missile. In the museum at Port Elizabeth there were plaster casts of hail-stones as large as tennis balls. When one fell on your head it was like getting hit with a chimney pot.

The bed of our creek was a seething, impassable torrent, and we were yet far from camp. We sloshed on. The rain continued. At length we rounded a bend, and the ox-wagon lay before us. It stood in the center of a surging flood, a hundred feet across. The swirling yellow water was at the wheel tops, and just beginning to enter the wagon box, which threatened any moment to float away on a nautical safari of its own. Flint stopped shaking. There wasn't time to shiver. We waded out to the wagon through water deliciously warm, and stuck our heads under the canvas flaps. My son was sitting on the hide springs, a foot or two above the miniature waves.

"How are you?" I said.

"I'm cured," he replied. "Say, this is the life, though. When do we take to the life rafts?"

"He's as right as rain," said Flint.

"Anyone who uses that expression in the future forfeits my respect," I announced.

Flint ordered the oxen gathered on the edge of

the stream. A long rope was attached to the wagon. Slowly it was drawn to high ground. Then it suddenly stopped raining, and the sun, low down on the horizon, broke through the hostile clouds, illuminating them with rich but watery reds. All the boys' food, some of ours, the logs for fire-wood, Flint's bedding—in fact, whatever lay under the wagon, had been swept away. Outside of this, everything was all right. My son's fever had left him. The boys went back and brought in the oribi that had been killed by the hail-stones for their supper. Flint figured he could sleep in the wagon on some old blankets. Normalcy was restored almost before we were aware of its absence. Supper that night was gay. The stars were all out. The clouds had vanished. We were ready for our next novelty.

In the morning we roughly measured the rise of water in the creek. It had risen six feet, four inches in two hours and a half.

The sun shone brilliantly. The earth lay before us as fresh and clean as a thorough washing could make it. As we sat at breakfast, two pigs strolled up to within a couple of hundred yards. I got both of them with two shots. This vexed the dogs considerably. They seemed to consider it an infringe-

ment of their rights, but they ate the meat. The day was starting off auspiciously.

We inspanned, and headed cross-country. Hobson's Choice vanished behind us. The dogs got a pig. I shot an oribi—dead. The Nandi's eyes began to brighten.

My son rode on the wagon. Flint and I went to look for a kongoni. Soon we were stalking one from ant heap to ant heap. "It's a ridiculous shot," said he at length, "but we simply can't get any closer." I rested the gun over an ant hill; fired. He dropped. It was three hundred and fifty-six yards when we paced the distance. I felt as Rubinstein must have when he first became conscious he could really scratch the ivories. Flint left me to go for some porters. While he was gone, I shot another kongoni. This time at three hundred and seventy-five yards. I was beginning to feel positively nonchalant about rifle shooting. I would have undertaken to knock an apple off anybody's head at a couple of hundred yards, preferably the head of someone I had a grudge against.

At length the skinners arrived. The first thing they did was to eviscerate one of the carcasses, then remove the stomach and wring out the mois-

ture. Each cut off a strip and began to eat it noisily as they proceeded with their work.

"I think that's a filthy performance," I remarked to Flint.

"Well you'd better get used to it," he answered, "for that's what they do, and they've been doing it for centuries, too. We can't undertake to alter their minor peculiarities."

We left the boys chewing contentedly on their morsels of raw tripe, and returned to the wagon. On the way Flint stopped at an ant bear hole with the remark: "There's a pig down there. Stand in front of the hole, and when he comes out get him." Then he proceeded to stamp on the ground over the opening. A pig came out sure enough, but just behind him was another and just behind that one, still another. For an instant the ground vomited pigs. Of course, I didn't shoot—I was too startled. "You must get used to the unexpected," was Flint's only comment.

In the late afternoon I shot a jackal, which probably doesn't interest anybody else in the world, but it did me because it was such a small target. I began to feel more and more like the direct descendant of William Tell and Anna Oakley. Then, in the

steel gray twilight, we amused ourselves stalking various forms that stood out like silhouettes on the sky line, but without hostile intentions. We had been bloodthirsty enough for one day. I returned to the wagon, in the dark, alone. At one point my path led across a patch of ground several hundred feet wide, riddled with holes about an inch in diameter like a large colander. Each hole had an inmate that stuck its head out and filled the air with a penetrating, vibrant whistle. What they were, I never found out, but walking across that patch in the dark, with the ground beneath your feet alive and whistling shrilly, gave one an odd sensation. I felt as though I was being jeered at, and stepped high.

That night the scene about the wagon was festive and cheerful. Two large fires blazed,—we had come across the remains of an old plank shelter on our travels—and from every available projection hung meat—legs, shoulders, tenderloins, briskets and just plain gobs. They were red, gruesome festoons, but our boys appeared to regard them with as much satisfaction as if they were symbolical of a great and unexpected victory. In a sense they were. Flat stomachs were no longer to be feared.

Sunrise saw Flint and me walking home across the plateau, the wagon and my son taking their own devious and diabolical way to the same destination. As we walked along we were the center of a ring of animals; a ring with a radius of about five hundred yards. As we progressed, there was a falling away in front and a closing up in the rear, so that we never lost our position, as the middle points of this animated circle.

We stalked some topi by Christian Science. That is to say, we sat down and hoped they'd come by. "They'll go through there in a few minutes," Flint said, indicating a small depression. And they did. I shot one running at about three hundred yards. It was beginning to seem like child's play. In fact, it was child's play, for shortly Flint took me to within eighty yards of a fine topi. We were on top of a slight hill, looking down on him. I fired six shots at him before he realized that someone was taking liberties with him, and changed his feeding ground. Every shot went yards over him. "You're shooting down hill," said Flint. "Are you aiming low?"

"If I aimed any lower, I'd be shooting backwards," I answered, quite discouraged.

"When you're shooting down hill," he persisted, "aim way under them. But never mind now," he added, as I let a shot drive into the ground where the topi had been standing. "There's the house over there. After breakfast, we'll pack up, for tomorrow we start for the Elgayo Escarpment after big stuff."

XI

AT breakfast we were brought up to date on the news of the Plateau. Mrs. Leathers supplied the news, we supplied respectful attention. If her gossip was in the nature of chicken feed, we swallowed it after the manner of poultry, greedily and unmasticated.

Four or five of Smilie's cows had been dying nightly. Some new disease, no less deadly because of its strangeness. The Vet from Eldoret was going to perform an autopsy. But no matter what his diagnosis was, it would be wrong. Hopkins, a neighbor, had closed a short cut across his land to the Burnt Forest that had always been considered a right of way. This was nothing short of despotism carried to the point of eccentricity. We sulked over this, and planned blood-curdling reprisals. Some of the boys had been raiding the mealie patch, but Mr. Leathers had waited for

them with a shot gun one night—and now they weren't raiding the mealie patch any more. This last remark seemed somewhat in the nature of an anti-climax, but so it went on. Life on the Plateau was growing complex.

There were guests for breakfast. The Government Cattle Inspector, sun-burned and ruddy; a young District Commissioner and his bride, both as pink and white as the best English traditions demanded; an immaculate Police Sergeant, who had appeared mounted on a very supercilious looking mule, followed by a black orderly on a mule several degrees more democratic in appearance.

But the guests who gladdened our hearts the most were two elderly brothers. They had walked over from their farm fourteen miles away for a chat. They were little men, grizzled and wiry, and told three lies in such rapid succession that they at once captured our attention. We were full of our adventures. But when we boasted of how the water in our dry creek bed had risen over six feet in two hours, they rocked with silent laughter.

"They think they've seen water rise," one of them remarked to the other, with a look of pity.

"If you want to know how water can rise, I'll tell you. Brother Ed and I were camped on the Bombo Flats in 1907—five rivers join into one there. It started to rain. In an hour and twelve minutes, by my watch, the water had risen sixty-five feet."

"Yes," said brother Ed, "but as I remember, it was only an hour and ten minutes."

Then Flint spoke of the curious course a bullet had taken when it hit a stone, and ricocheted.

"How about bullets ricocheting?" brother Ed remarked to his brother, with a brittle laugh. "In the spring of 1912," he proceeded, "brother Frank and I were walking over to a neighbor's. Behind us was a boy with a basket of oranges on his head. A short distance from the house we saw two oribi standing about two hundred yards away. They were in line, so I told brother Frank to shoot 'em—both at once. He fired. The bullet went through the hearts of both oribi, hit a rock, bounced back and killed the boy with the basket of oranges on his head—dead."

"Yes, killed him dead," said brother Frank.

This seemed rather gruesome, so it was some minutes before the subject turned to shooting

again. Then I referred to the fact I'd shot a kongoni at three hundred and seventy-five yards.

"He wants to know about shooting," said brother Ed looking towards brother Frank with his eyebrows raised. "It was January in 1906 when my brother and I were walking across the veldt somewhere down South."

"The Bombo Flats?" I enquired.

"Right near there," he answered. "Frank was looking through the Zeiss glasses. 'There's three steinbok over there,' he said. 'Let's see you knock 'em down.' I fired three times. We paced it off, as we went to the spot. It was twelve hundred and forty yards. When I got there, two of the steinbok were stone dead, the third was wounded. I shot him as he was running away."

"Why, a steinbok isn't any bigger than a greyhound," said Flint incredulously. "At twelve hundred and forty yards you couldn't see him."

"It was twelve hundred and forty yards," said brother Frank. "I was there."

The rest of the day we spent looking over our kag, for in the morning we were to leave for the Elgayo Escarpment. Rawson's Farm, on the edge of the great woods, known as Grogan's Con-

cession, was to afford us shelter the first night, and as far as this lonely habitation we were to be escorted by an ox-wagon. Thenceforth, we were to cut loose from such effeminacy and proceed on our own feet.

Even Gregg had joined our expedition, in spite of the fact he was a bridegroom. It was only necessary to make the suggestion for him to leap at the chance with an alacrity that was positively startling. The bride did not utter ululations of joy over this excursion. Nor could she be blamed for their omission. They had just moved into their small remote farm-house. But hunting, to men like Flint and Gregg, came first in life, so the bride was left in solitude to listen to the yells of the hyenas.

My son had contracted an unpleasant malady called "veldt sores." Whenever he cut himself the wound not only refused to heal, but remained open and distinctly unpleasant to the eye. "It's the altitude," said Mr. Leathers. "His blood is thin yet." Said Mrs. Leathers: "He isn't eating enough," and proceeded to put him through a culinary third degree. Whatever the cause, the veldt sores lingered. He was developing into a prob-

lem. "Leave him at Rawson's," advised Flint. "This Elgayo Reserve's an unhealthy patch anyway"— "Not friendly to adolescence," added Gregg.

"But Rawson has something to say," I suggested.

"In this country the sanctity of hospitality is as thoroughly understood as it was in ancient Greece," remarked Gregg. He was a University graduate. The matter seemed settled.

It was fourteen miles to Rawson's. With cracking whips and creaking wheels we set off on our adventure, while the population of the farm, to the most insignificant unit, gathered to wave us Godspeed. The three inky handmaidens, with the balloon sleeves, followed for half a mile acting distinctly skittish. The response of our sable hued manhood was barbaric horseplay and weird syncopated gyrations. The farm disappeared in the distance. We slipped over the horizon into a new environment.

All day we lumbered slowly over the veldt. I missed five oribi point blank. I fired seven shots at an ostrich sixty yards away. It stood with an idiotic expression, its bald head twisted so it could

observe me with a large liquid eye. My last shot dislodged a tail-feather. The rape of this piece of personal property did not seem to impress it favorably and, uttering a queer hiss in its throat, it ambled away as though it had just remembered an important engagement. This shooting discouraged me almost to the breaking point.

"Did you notice that bird give me the trout eye, and then hiss me?" I remarked bitterly. "The cafés of Paris are the hunting grounds I belong in."

"Forget it," said Flint. "The best shots do extraordinary things down here. We all have our off days." He was the most optimistic fellow I ever knew.

My son knocked down a reed buck. Following a gruesome tradition, he ran over and plunged his hunting knife into the throat of the animal. With that, the buck jumped to his feet and disappeared over the skyline, knife and all. It was becoming horrible. "The boys from the farm will get him," remarked Flint, following his disappearing form with an appraising eye.

"This country degenerates into gory farce at times," I complained.

"When all is said and done," Flint answered, "it's still the Africa of Livingstone and Stanley; —youthful and brutal."

"It's a land of strange contradictions," remarked Gregg. "For instance, they call it the Dark Continent—and yet it's a land of blazing sunshine. I read that in a book—jolly good—what."

We stopped for a moment at the farm of a Dutchman. His eye was wild. He complained bitterly of the way elephants were treating him. Fences, crops, trees had gone down before them, until his land was devastated. He spoke of indemnity, and swore plentifully. We left him no richer, but considerably relieved.

As we drifted along, one of the Nandi demonstrated the use of the "runga"—a short throwing stick terminating in a knob. With sinister grace he stalked to within thirty yards of an oribi, then threw his weapon with an end-over-end motion. Its gyrations snapped one of the delicate legs like a pipe stem. Now it was but a simple matter for him to run the animal down. Again, a skillful performance, but one-sided. The oribi derived no enjoyment from it whatever.

The sun set. We stumbled through the night.

I was exhausted. Pride alone kept me off the ox-wagon. I was supposed to be a hard-boiled Saxon, and felt I must preserve the tradition. But my ideas relating to African equipment were revolutionized. I had set out with huge boots that laced to the knee. In the rays of the early morning sun they had looked very swagger. Now they were choking me to death. Moreover each had developed a set of teeth like a shark's. Several times during the day I hadn't been able to run as fast as the ox-wagon, and, inasmuch as a large part of one's hunting in Africa consists in seeing how fast he can run, this was a distinct drawback. I had loaded myself down as well with a cartridge belt, bursting with ammunition, a revolver, a rifle, Zeiss glasses and one or two other trinkets that custom, as I understood it, seemed to demand. After this single experience of acting as a Christmas tree for a Colonial Outfitter, I abandoned everything—even my trousers.

I felt I could not stumble another foot—for the last mile the same feeling had persisted. Then there was a commotion ahead. A door opened. A beam of light pierced the darkness. In it stood a man in khaki trousers and flannel shirt open at the

throat. He cast a super-shadow all gangling and fantastic. "It's Rawson," said Flint.

We were ushered into a sizeable hut of wattles and mud. The floor was of mud. The interior partitions, rising about eight feet in height, were mud. As Rawson shook me by the hand, I almost found myself saying: "Pleased to meet you. My name is Mud. I want to lie down." Thatch covered the peaked roof. Between it and the outer walls was an air-space of a foot or so in width. Nothing was neglected to insure the circulation of air—and other things of a feathered and furry nature. Supper was immediately placed on the table of rough boards. On either side we ranged ourselves on wooden benches.

Rawson was a jovial fellow. The first thing he did, as he began some rough surgery on a corned beef that seemed to demand the precise treatment it was getting, was to complain of his social obligations. "There's the Viscountess—she got engaged —there was an engagement present. Then she married—a wedding present. Now, she's had a daughter. That means a christening present. And, to cap the climax, Charlie Chaplin's gone and married again. There's another wedding present.

They think I'm made of money, these people.—It's keeping me poor, all this—."

But he got no farther. From the cornice on one side of the room, two hairy bodies leapt to the table in one jump, seized the corned beef and sprang to the cornice on the opposite side in another, using the table as a spring board. "Damn those monkeys! Head 'em off," said Rawson, and reached for a long rod that stood in a corner, evidently for just such emergencies.

One and all we responded to the call and joined in a chase for our dinner. It was a stern chase, and surged back and forth across the rafters above our heads. The monkeys screamed warnings to whichever one was hugging the brisket at the moment, and vituperation at us. We yelled directions at each other, and evil words at the monkeys. For a while it was a fair pandemonium. Then, some hero fetched the monkey, who was "carrying the ball," a nasty whack with a pole. With a simian oath, he fumbled the sphere and retired to a corner to sulk. As soon as it hit the mud, fourteen dogs grabbed it. They seemed to think it was high time somebody made a touchdown. Now, Rawson plunged through the line in a brilliant offensive

play. One of the dogs grounded a forward pass. Rawson fell on the oval, and the first half was over. He nursed it in his arms like an injured child, for a moment, and set it back on the platter with the remark: "You can hardly see any teeth marks on it." He was right. There weren't many teeth marks. It merely looked as though it had been kicked around the block by an infuriated mob.

"What was it all about?" I enquired.

"They're my pet monkeys," he answered. "Two Colobus and two Blue. I found them in the woods as babies, and brought them up by hand. They're a nuisance at times, but when you live on the edge of a forest like Grogan's Concession you crave companionship."

The four monkeys now gathered on the rafters, directly over the table, and dropped revolting objects into our food. They selected Gregg, for some reason, as their particular target. Probably there was a natural antipathy. Gregg was immaculate, and did not like monkeys. Monkeys and children are supposed to know instinctively whom they can trust. They would aim deliberately at Gregg's plate, sighting the missile like sharp-shooters. If it was a miss, they corrected the error, and

tried again. At length Gregg became so annoyed he left the table. It was an acrobatic meal. Before we had finished dessert there was another air raid. This time the table was tipped over, and the wreckage was fairly complete. "Well, I guess we're through," Rawson announced cheerfully.

It had been an uneventful day in a way. Yet, mentally, I was topsy-turvy. It all seemed distorted, like the frothy visions of a delirium.

We retired early. About 3 A. M. the air got exceedingly nippy. I was remarking on this with considerable dissatisfaction when something dropped onto my bed. It pulled down the blankets, slipped in beside me, patted the bedding down smoothly, pulled it snugly around the necks of us both, then, rolling itself into a comfortable position against the small of my back, it uttered a long sigh of content, and went to sleep. It was one of the monkeys. I confess I didn't have the heart to kick him out; he seemed so frail, so pitiful, so pathetic. At 5.30, when I got up, he was gone. So was my shirt! After accusing everybody in a truculent manner, I discovered it on the peak of the roof. My bed-fellow had borrowed it. He amused himself trying it on from every conceivable

angle. It was ripped, frazzled and practically disemboweled. But in Africa a shirt is a shirt, no matter what its physical condition. I was glad to get it back on terms of a general amnesty though it seemed to me then, and still does, the worst case of ungratefulness I had ever known.

XII

AS we sat eating breakfast a breathless Wanderobo, a worthy representative of an unfragrant race, rushed to the open doorway in contravention of all equatorial etiquette. There were many elephants in the forest it seemed, and if we would follow him we would come by much choice ivory. Incidentally, himself, and his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts would acquire sudden opulence in the form of raw meat in great bulk. Of course, we were keen to go, but Rawson shook his head. "I get that every day," he said. "Certainly there are elephants in the forest. There are also fish in the ocean. If you want to spend anywhere from two hours to two weeks looking for them, we'll find 'em. But, if we start chasing an elephant, cancel all your social engagements for an indefinite period." We decided to let the matter drop.

Next a stray Masai, his body covered with in-

tricate patterns in white clay, teetered up. He was the possessor of a python skin twenty-one feet in length, and eighteen inches in width. I coveted this hairless pelt, so he was persuaded to part with it for twenty-one shillings—a shilling a foot. A fair price, considering the state of the market for snake skins. He departed full of elation, the envy of all the other boys. In half an hour, he returned. He'd changed his mind, and wanted to rescind the bargain. Rawson addressed him forcibly, with dramatic gestures, and, skinless, he merged with the forest to be seen no more.

The ox-wagon was unloaded, its contents divided into packages weighing forty or fifty pounds apiece, and each boy was formally introduced to his load. No doubt was left in his mind that he was personally, and unequivocally, responsible for his particular bundle. From then on, he guarded it with feline alertness. He watched his neighbor with a vigilance no less than Argus-eyed so, though the temptation was well nigh irresistible, stealing was next to impossible.

Out of the bustle, on the sunny side of the shack's mud wall, sat Simba—named for the lion; Simba, the brave one. Every modern safari, worthy of the

name, has its quota of Simbas. Our particular Simba wore a dejected look, and took no interest in the festive scene about him. "He's got a pain reaching from one end of his midriff to the other," Flint remarked. "It's nothing but 'tumbo,' I know that bird."

For a while Simba writhed in silence. Then he seemed filled with a great resolve. With a finger, he traced a line on his naked abdomen that followed the course of the pain. It was on his left side, running from the pit of his stomach for about six inches around his ribs. Next, he bunched up the skin along this imaginary line between his thumb and forefinger, and proceeded to saw incisions along it with a dull knife. These incisions were cut with meticulous accuracy, three-eighths of an inch long and a quarter deep. The knife was so dull that this method of alleviating pain was unpleasant to look upon, so I passed him an old Gillette blade, and his work became neater. Finally there were nearly thirty incisions reaching half way around the bottom of his ribs. About him a row of boys squatted on their heels, observing each move he made with grave intentness. Now he borrowed a few permanganate crystals and, on the

sole of his sandal, ground them to a powder with the knobbed end of his runga. The result was a septic paste that seemed highly satisfactory to Simba, for he now proceeded to rub it into the incisions. The treatment was over. He was a well man once more. The pain had been chased away by a counter-attack. It was Tropical Christian Science applied with a worn out razor blade.

The permanent result of the treatment was a row of beadlike scars reaching half around his body,—a warning to all imps of misery that this area was no longer a play-ground for devils. Now I knew what these scars meant on the oily skins of all the other black men and women.

At this moment a terrible clamor arose over another matter. One of Rawson's sheep had been stolen, and the cold eye of suspicion fell on the Masai in charge of the flock. Instantly all work was suspended. He was apprehended, and tried on the spot. The prosecution and defense were turned over to the boys, both our own and Rawson's. Two rows were formed, with the defendant at one end; the boys to his left were for acquittal, to his right, for conviction. Each, in turn, got up and made a terse, dramatic speech for, or

against, as his sentiments prompted. The restrained emphasis, eloquent gestures and rhythmic language that was packed into those speeches could not have been surpassed by Henry Clay himself. They were all natural orators. The only point of difference between them and Roscoe Conkling, or Gladstone, was that whenever one of them ended a vivid, musical paragraph, and came to a dramatic pause, he looked his opponent square in the eye, and spat through his teeth. It was an act of triumphant finality. It represented forcibly and comprehensively—exclamation mark, question mark, period. Nothing could possibly shrivel the efforts of the last speaker, or crumble his logic, like this insolent salvo of saliva. It was expectoration raised to the dignity of an art. From left to right, from right to left, the tide of battle surged. Then Kipsong cut the head from the sheep, dissected the throat and laid bare the crushed glands therein. Obviously, the sheep had been strangled to death. The only animal capable of dealing this form of death was man.

"Enough of this tommy-rot," said Rawson. "He gets fifteen. Lay him down."

The culprit was laid on the ground, face down-

ward, and a blanket thrown over his breech. While one of the Head Boys held him, thus Rawson wielded the kiboko, the traditional rhinocerous-hide scourge of Africa. It was not a terrible chastisement, but distinctly undignified. After the kiboko had hissed over the thievish buttocks fifteen times, Rawson paused. "Did you steal the sheep?" he demanded.

"No, bwana," said the boy. So Rawson wiped the perspiration from his brow, and laid on fifteen more.

"Did you steal the sheep?" he again enquired.

"No, bwana," the boy replied.

"Well, go to the devil," said Rawson. "It's too hot for any more of this." The boy leapt to his feet, and scuttled away among the trees.

"Why did you cover up his nether regions?" I enquired.

"Because, if through some asinine accident I had drawn blood, he would have run to the nearest District Commissioner and charged me with attempted homicide. They're very clever at this. Then old ladies in England of both sexes, as the fellow says, raise a hurrah about us degenerate products of the tropics brutalizing the negro. God bless my soul!

The life of the twentieth century pioneer is nothing short of a sentimental nightmare."

In the evening the mutton thief confessed, and it was a relief to us all to know that there had not been a miscarriage of justice. It developed that my trackers and porters regarded themselves as on nothing less than a Roman holiday. They had swaggered into Rawson's and deviled, bullied and chivied the poor shepherd until, from sheer weariness, he undertook to set them up to a sheep. But now justice had been done. We ate the mutton.

The novelties provided by Nature for my afternoon's entertainment consisted in seeing two leopards, and picking up, on the edge of the forest, the bleached skull of a Masai warrior, dead these twelve months. Ever since, I have kept his skull near me as a lucky-piece. My inclination was to do likewise with the hides of the leopards. But it was not to be. Just before sun-down, a young man, who lived with Rawson, offered to pilot me to a salt-lick inside the forest; an island-like open space, three hundred yards in diameter, surrounded by a tangle of subtropical vegetation. To reach it, we left the open country and proceeded in and out

among clumps of trees. Gradually they merged into larger and larger bodies until, catlike, we were picking our way along mere game trails. We approached the rim of the "lick" with painstaking caution. Breathlessly, we peered across it.

"Look!" my companion whispered. There, two hundred and fifty yards from us, as still as though carved from marble, stood a huge leopard. The sight excited me so I couldn't even see its spots and, to this day, I visualize it only as a great tawny cat. Though its body was quiescent, the tip of its tail twitched slowly back and forth with sinister grace —symbolical of nervous forces and steely muscles for the moment dormant. As we watched, from the grass nearby its companion arose and glared intently in our direction. In spite of our stealth, or maybe on account of it,—my idea of stealth being rather boisterous,—it had either heard or winded us.

"He was lying in the grass ready to jump the first waterbuck that came along," my friend whispered. "Shoot, they'll be away in a jiffy."

And so we did—both of us, to see the two animals bound away into the woods, unscathed. As they melted into the jungle, the last rays of the

tropical sun turned their sleek bodies to molten gold.

Surely there can be no sweeter sight in Africa.

"Hell!" remarked my guide.

"There's a great deal in what you say," I replied, and we started for home.

Shortly after this, as I scuffled through the grass of a small open space, my toe kicked a spherical object that rolled away like a cocoanut. I looked down, to find myself tangled up most intimately with a human skeleton, picked clean and bleached white by many beetles and the vertical rays of much equatorial sun. There is always a gruesome appeal to a framework such as this lying unhoused on the edge of a forest in which leopards scamper hither and thither, and the only practical trails are opened by elephants. I felt on the verge of committing at least an elegy or soliloquy, if nothing worse. For a moment it bubbled on my lips, then I got the upper hand.

"Who's this lazy fellow lying out in the damp without any clothes on?" I enquired of my friend, relieved beyond words that I had not committed the unpardonable error of becoming emotional in Africa.

"A year ago," he answered, "some young Masai staged a 'rising' hereabouts. They ran off cattle belonging to a Dutchman named Hergsheimer. He went wild. There weren't any white men about to help. He grabbed up forty rounds, and chased the rascals into the woods. This boy couldn't run as fast as Hergie. When night fell, Hergie found himself five miles back in the bush. He had been so upset, he'd shot off all his ammunition—an asinine trick. He might have stumbled on a leopard."

Personally, I could think of about eighteen other things he might have stumbled on, and about fourteen that might have stumbled on him, not to mention the Masai on the war-path, but accepted the matter as laid down. I gathered up the skull and, by the light of a match, jotted down the high spots of this battle on its brain-pan. Of all the trophies I had yet seen, this was the most typically African. The only qualm I felt was at placing such a gap as twelve thousand miles between the head of this boy and the rest of his body, but surely, in his situation, Time and Space and Change had long since ceased to be of interest.

This night another monkey slept with me. It

was not the same one. It appeared to have been noised abroad that I was a most desirable bed-fellow, for all the apes attempted to enter my bed at once. It couldn't be done, so instead of drawing lots for the privilege, like sensible pacifists, they did battle for it up and down my supine body. Then the victor pulled down the blankets, and snuggled in. It would be an affectation to deny that I was not a little flattered. I had never been fought over like this before. Apparently the mother instinct was breaking out in me. The three disappointed triflers shared the bed of my son.

"How would you like to have four monkeys for room-mates while I go down into this Elgayo Reserve?" I asked him in the morning, for I felt it would be well to leave him here.

"Go ahead," he replied. "I'll be here when you come back. Say, this is the life, isn't it?"

And so I left him at this monkey house of Rawson's, on the edge of the forest known as Grogan's Concession. When I came back there he was sure enough. He looked like a charcoal burner from the Schwartz Wald, and seemed on terms of almost fraternal intimacy with his simian friends.

They understood each other in a way that it seems almost a sacrilege even to mention. An understanding, positively telepathic, had united them in a single happy communion.

"Hello," I said. "Have you washed for a fortnight?"

"No," he answered. "I've enjoyed myself. One of the blue monkeys was sick yesterday. He ate something. Rawson and I made a Scotch cart. I've been in the forest every day shooting. There's a hundred and sixty acres next to Rawson's, vacant. I've staked it out. I'm going into partnership with him. Gee! Dad, let's stay on."

"Life is charming," I told him, "only when one does not stay on. Long before the subtle alchemy of Reality transforms these beasts from truly Celestial companions to mere unfrocked monkeys, we must be far away. On we must move—and on—and on. Go groom yourself, and thrill to the thought of what tomorrow may hold in store." He departed, but before he went he shot me a look that indicated far more clearly than words that, in his opinion, every screw in my shattered framework was loose.

Thus, after a fortnight, we met again,—my son

and I. But now, I was old in the wisdom of Africa, for on the other side of the forest I had seen her without her makeup; in the raw, with fangs exposed.

XIII

IT was a twelve mile march through the forest to the top of the Escarpment. Blithely, we fared forth, a jocund but heterogeneous company. Flint, Gregg and I led off, followed by the Nandi trackers in loose formation. Then, dragging rearward like a futile tail that had been stepped on and ruined, shuffled the Kavirondos, the traditional burden-bearers. Gregg had fetched along a handful of his own boys decked in the Gregg livery—flapping, second-hand English ulsters. They were distinctly second-hand ulsters, designed to fit bodies shaped like isosceles triangles. Their contribution to the romance of the scene was negative. Leading us all, with an expression of mellow blandness on his wrinkled features, marched Leg Leg, a Wanderboro guide, who was to escort us to the edge of the Escarpment.

We waved adieu to civilization. Rawson, the four monkeys and my son disappeared behind a clump of strange trees, and the fastnesses of Gro-

gan's Concession received us into its embrace. Thirty minutes later, we suffered our first defeat. It was necessary to discharge Leg Leg, the guide. He was so superlatively aromatic all of us who marched behind him were entering the primary stages of asphyxiation.

Trees of every shape and size hemmed us in. A pair of blue monkeys peered at us intently for a moment, to flash out of sight along their arboreal thoroughfares. Crossing the glade was a series of round holes, eighteen inches across and two feet deep. "Elephant tracks made during the last rains," said Flint. A bush buck pushed its head through the rank vegetation, surveyed our party intently, and withdrew so silently as to cause one to wonder if it had not been a phantom.

"He's impossible," gasped Gregg. "I can't carry on."

"Our relations are about to terminate right here," exclaimed Flint.

"But he's got to guide us through the forest," I objected.

"I'd rather be lost in the forest for days, perish of hunger and die of thirst than have him guide us another rod," Gregg exploded.

So Flint placed a shilling in the palm of Leg Leg's hand, accompanied by a chiding, evil look, and, with a dumb show that it is fortunately unnecessary to more than mention, pointed towards the jungle. With stoical indifference, Leg Leg received the coin, hitched the soiled skin that served as his only covering into an untidy bundle around his neck, spat on the ground with violence and vanished into the shadows as silently as had the bush buck before him. Once more we breathed freely.

With little difficulty we reached a hard-beaten path leading where we wanted to go, that is, if we knew where we wanted to go, which was not at all certain. Hour after hour we plodded through a shadowy land of mystery. No sound broke the stillness, no life was visible. Even bird notes were absent. At intervals wide swaths were cut through the tangle of vegetation in which trees, creepers and all growing things had been flattened out by forces irresistible and ruthless. "Elephant trails," said Gregg in a hushed voice. "Made last night," added Flint, kicking some monumental dung. Sap was still oozing from twisted branches. Moisture was still visible in huge circular foot-prints. A violent palpitation overtook me. I found myself

slinking from tree to tree, starting at the least rustle and turning my head from side to side like a mandarin. We were on the verge of intimacy with the earth's largest animal. The next moment might see him standing there regarding us with small red eyes. Thus we proceeded. We passed an empty-handed native going toward the Plateau, followed by his wife, smothered under the household goods. On her back she bore a bundle the size of a baby zeppelin, but waddled along stiff-legged and pigeon-toed, stolid, unemotional. Later, six nude warriors, striped from head to foot with white clay, appeared from the leaves on our right, with dramatic suddenness. They spoiled the poetic nature of the picture by uttering hysterical giggles when Flint spoke to them. At everything he said, they clucked, as one was wont to cluck to a horse in the past days.

"What's that mean?" I whispered to Gregg.

"That's their way of saying 'yes,' " he answered.

"It doesn't sound grammatical," I answered.

"It's dramatic though, and requires no exertion," he replied.

The amiable warriors filed away into the forest. Ten minutes later we stood on the edge of the

Escarpment and looked down into the Rift Valley, four thousand two hundred feet below us.

It reached North and South as far as the eye could see. Directly opposite us, about seven miles distant, rose the Kamisia Range, red and barren in the blazing sun. We actually looked down on them, and past them to other ranges, and so on and on, until, at the sky line, they gathered into a silhouette of rugged peaks. Wild and bilious looking scenery, smothered under heat waves.

Far below us lay a tiny lake, with a big name—Lake Kamnarok; a wriggly line—the River Ndo. The red, sun-baked floor of the valley was covered with tiny dots. "Mimosa trees," volunteered Flint. At the base of the Escarpment, just beneath us, nestled a cluster of bee-hive huts—the Elgayo Village of Mutei.

The descent we were about to make, while not exactly perpendicular, was robust and precipitous. We ate a canned lunch. One by one the porters straggled in, streaming with perspiration, for the forest had been very humid. As the last boy arrived, we started down. For two and a half hours we chased that Elgayo Village, at the base of the Escarpment,

like a will-o'-the-wisp. Even with gravity on our side, it seemed impossible to catch up with it. The air was lifeless, the heat stifling. What the others busied their minds with, I knew not. Moreover, I did not care. My own was occupied visualizing babbling brooks and crystal ponds covered with lily-pads.

At length we reached a boulder-strewn region, cut up into countless gullies. We were nearly down. The valley now stretched away, a flat unfertile plain, while, behind us towering into the Western sky, rose the edge of the Plateau from which we had so painfully descended. Flint led, followed by Gregg. I made a poor third. Around us deployed a dozen Nandi, fresh as lilies, oblivious to the terrific waves of heat decanted upon us by the white, relentless sun.

Suddenly, twenty feet from Flint, a naked savage sprang from behind a rock. In his hand he held a bow and three arrows. For an instant he gibbered and chattered, apelike, white foam flecking the corners of his mouth, then, almost faster than the eye could follow, he fitted an arrow to the bow, drew it back to the head and loosed it at Flint. With a muttered imprecation, Flint dodged

to one side; the arrow passed beneath his left arm, to rattle harmlessly into the rocks behind him. For the fraction of a second we stood paralyzed. Action followed, dramatic, incredibly swift. Like a cat, Flint leapt ten feet to the right, pumped a cartridge into his rifle, threw it to his shoulder. Gregg crouched behind the buffalo-hide shield of a Nandi; automatically, I did likewise, vaguely wondering what this extraordinary proceeding was all about. One of Gregg's boys, a gigantic negro, the tails of his second-hand ulster flapping grotesquely about his legs, leapt forward and poured forth a torrent of guttural words at the savage. A second arrow zipped past his head with a whistling sound. It was a fantastic tableau. The naked savage stood like a statue of black marble, his third and last arrow drawn back to the head, about to loose it at Flint. Flint was slowly squeezing the trigger of his .303. Two thoughts flashed through my mind. "I'm going to see a human head blown to bits by a soft-nosed bullet—a hundred savages are about to spring from their hiding places and smother us under a rain of arrows." Instead a strange thing happened. One of our boys, his face screwed into a hideous expression, uttered a piercing, ghastly

scream. It split the air so unexpectedly, so unearthly was its quality, that, for the briefest fraction of time, Flint, the savage, all of us, were frozen in our tracks, as though turned to stone. This infinitesimal pause was enough. Half a dozen Nandi leapt on the savage. The bow was wrenched from his clutching fingers. He was flung to the ground. Then it was we learned that he was alone.

"Well, I'm dashed," said Gregg, emerging from behind his buffalo-hide shield. "As my grandfather, who was averse to strong language, used to say when greatly annoyed, 'what next'?"

"Take him down to the village," said Flint, nodding toward the savage and ejecting the cartridge from the chamber of his rifle.

Half an hour later, beneath the benevolent shade of a huge tree, we met the Chiefs. The gurgle of a small rill of water sounded musically in our ears. Against its exposed and devious roots we relaxed, to listen to explanations and apologies no less devious.

"The boy was an idiot. Yes, sir! When he was a few weeks old he fell into the fire. His father had to go into the woods on business. The foolish fellow had stolen some arrows and a bow,

and gone on a solitary 'war path.' Of course, they would gladly do whatever the bwana desired."

The prisoner was led forward. To all the questions Flint addressed to him, he made but one reply.

"What does he say?" I asked.

"His reply to everything," answered Flint, "is 'monkey-up-a-tree.' They are his only words. I don't know if he's crazy or not. But I do know I'm not going to lug him up four thousand feet of escarpment to lodge him with the nearest D. C." In a bored way, he addressed the Chiefs.

"Come on! What did you say?" I asked almost before he'd finished.

"I told them I'd accept six goats as a fine—or we would all go up to the D. C.'s," he replied, adding, "I took jolly good care to make the fine small enough so there would be no question as to their accepting it, rather than the climb up the Escarpment."

"You know, I wouldn't take a thousand pounds for that experience," I remarked later. "As long as I live—in moments horrible with dullness—when mediocrity is pressing from all sides—it will rise up to refresh me."

"It's very gratifying to have been the means of giving you all these vivid reactions," he answered. "But this particular bit was not covered by our arrangement. It's thrown in free. There's not even a cover-charge, so don't expect it to be repeated."

"Monkey-up-a-tree" vanished, to be seen no more. Around us, at a respectful distance, the flower and chivalry of the Elgayo Village sat in a great semicircle, observing every move we made with grave intentness. A boy was sent up a tree for fire wood. The ground was bare. The sound of his panga, as he hacked at a dead branch, was thrown back from the Escarpment in manifold echoes. From another tree our ground sheet was stretched to form a shelter for our beds. In battered Standard Oil tins the boys boiled their corn meal into gelatinous masses, and transferred it into their lean bodies in huge balls, rolled by grimy hands.

Night fell. As we were taking a leisurely dinner, four Elgayo warriors lined up ten feet away from our table. For fifteen minutes Flint continued his meal. Then he conversed with them briefly.

"They claim they know where the buffalo are," he remarked, "and want to take us there in the morning. So, with your approval, we'll start at 4 A. M."

XIV

THAT night I dreamed violently,—all over the place—dreams filled with battle, murder and sudden death, which ended, all of them, by something chasing me. The fair Diana herself, in the palmiest days of Greek culture, could not have been more thoroughly chased. When we were at length awakened in the dark, my first conscious act was to reach under the bed and reassure myself that the bow and arrows "monkey-up-a-tree" had employed so nefariously were still safe. As trophies, they were beginning to take precedence over my skull.

Led by the four Elgayo guides, we were too soon plodding through the night—a long, ragged procession, for the whole village was at our heels, from immature infants with protruding bellies to ancient men—mere frames of bone draped with skin. Hunting buffalo seemed a matter of great

enticement to these Elgayo; a festive occasion; an event that palpitated with interesting possibilities.

"Do they think I'm a Matador or something?" I asked Flint. "Why all this popularity?"

"No, they think they're going to come by some meat," he answered. "They're not interested in what you do, except as it leads to carnage and carcasses. Just a word about these buffalo. They're quite dangerous."

"Yes?" I enquired, after a pause. "Go on."

"That's the word," he answered—"dangerous."

It made more impression on me than if he had delivered a Chautauqua lecture on the subject. I had read of their ferocity and cunning, of how, in grassy country, when wounded they looped back on their own trail to wait for, and unexpectedly annihilate, the hunter phlegmatic enough to follow them. I was given to understand that, as a ghastly climax, they worked over their victims with hoof and horn, until what remained required but a small basket for removal. All this was common knowledge. Now I realized they were dangerous as well.

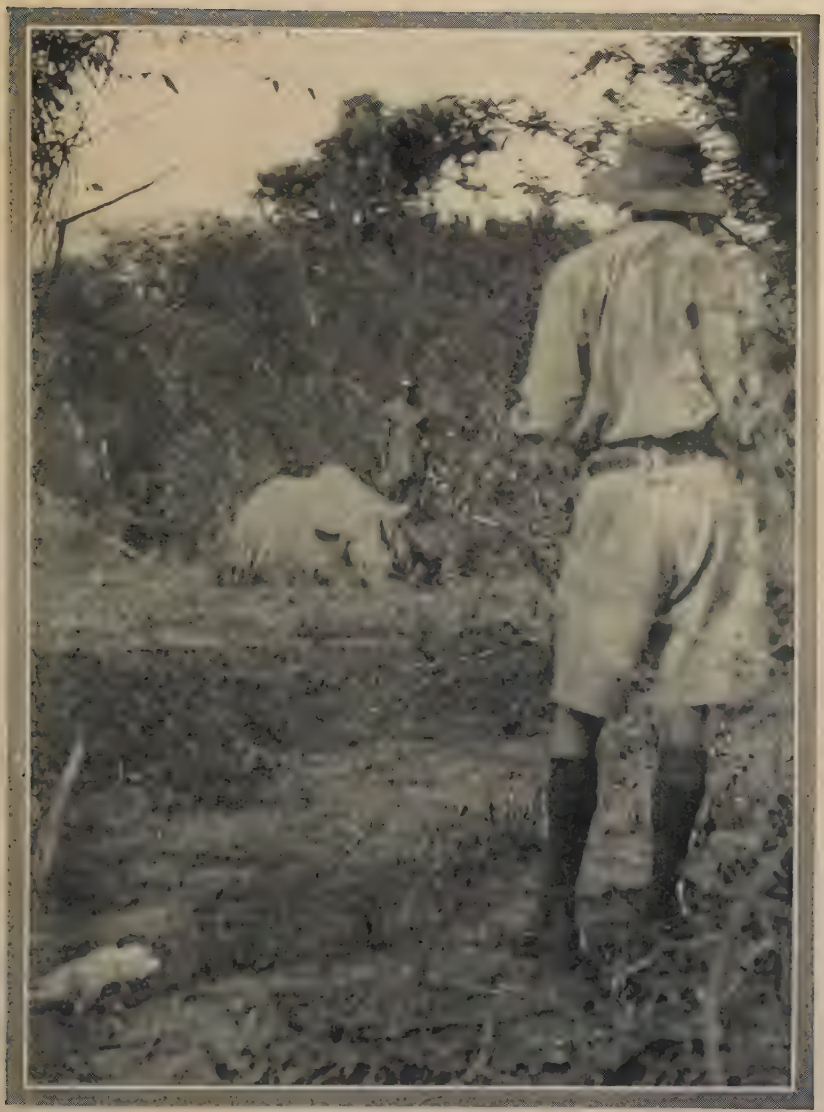
For an hour we stumbled through the dark. Then, just as the steely blue light threw surround-

ing objects into dim outline, we halted abruptly to find ourselves in a country of miniature hills and hollows, covered with a dense tangle of bush. Save for an intricate net-work of game trails, for the most part arched over like tunnels, it was an impenetrable, matted jungle.

The four trackers removed their sandals, the small circlet of bells worn around an ankle, to prevent them from spearing each other in the dark, or tall grass, and the small strip of cotton cloth which they wore, naïvely, about their waists. These preparations, this stripping for action so to speak, had a most sinister appearance.

"You're first," said Flint, pointing to one of the brush tunnels. He spoke as though it was a distinguished honor. "Follow your tracker closely, and I might add that you'll have to work fast. Buffalo ten or twenty yards away are hard to see in shadows. I'll be covering you."

Frankly, it was the kind of a place in which I would far rather have been last. Never have more courteous expressions risen to the end of my tongue —unpleasantly dry on this occasion. But too late! A well-oiled, shadowy Elgayo slipped into the trail ahead of me, and I was obliged to follow him, bent



Without a sound it sank to the ground—dead.

almost double, and stepping high like a cat with walnut shells on its feet, to avoid the snaky branches. Thus we proceeded on our quest for buffalo.

And now I became awake to the devilish designs of this tracker, Musswa, slipping along so silently in front of me. In the ground beneath our feet were huge circular impressions, maybe six inches in diameter, bisected by a partition of earth moulded by the cleft in the hoof that formed it. For hoof-print it was, incredible as it seemed. What was more, these impressions had been stamped but a few minutes previously. It was clear, our object was to follow them silently until we overtook their progenitor. Like contortionists on a holiday, we stole along our sinuous tunnel. No trail could have been warmer in both senses of the word. It might safely have been termed hot, for the sun was now peeping over the Kamasia Range to lend a touch of feverishness to the still air, while the ground bristled with indications that not many yards of brush screened us from at least one buffalo. Then, from behind us, came an awkward crashing in the thicket, followed by a couple of coughs and a sneeze. Instantly, in front of us, not more than ten

yards away, arose another kind of crashing,—that produced by the headlong flight of a huge body of boundless vitality. Shaking with rage, Musswa turned to quell this unspeakable breach of etiquette. His glance was full of venom. There, bent in every conceivable attitude that romantic fancies could dictate, trailed at least sixty people; Flint, Gregg, the whole adult male population of Elgayo Village, tapering into an adolescent section, succeeded by a juvenile and an infantile class, and finally the muling babes, dear, toddling, little mischiefs, smelling like decomposed lobster salads.

"What kind of a show do they think this is?" I asked Gregg. "Here, in perfectly good faith, I have been making an ass of myself stalking this buffalo thing—unconscious and innocent, while fifty pair of gummy eyes have been watching my antics. I tell you right now there's not enough privacy in Africa to suit me. I've never been more stared at in my life."

"It is a bit thick—quite," said Flint. "They can't follow us like that." And with violent, threatening gestures he drove this ill-assorted rabble back a hundred yards. All was well until we started forward, when at once they were on our

heels again. It was like trying to shake off a sheet of fly-paper. At length Flint, having exhausted his repertoire of threatening gestures, made a determined advance on each division, selected a likely-looking candidate and slapped him soundly with the flat of his hand. This received the full endorsement of Musswa. It also gradually removed this unwieldy human tail to the remote background.

Laboriously we made another stalk, repeating the same procedure. How these enormous beasts, weighing anywhere from a thousand to twelve hundred pounds, could move along these tangled trails that seemed to me an abattis of fallen branches and "wait-a-bit thorns"—silly things bent back like fish-hooks so that once fast to them, one's shirt, temper and half the bush let go together,—how these beasts, I say, could move through such entanglements and never make a sound was nothing short of a miracle.

Suddenly now, Musswa, literally drooling with excitement, began to motion me violently away from him, so back on top of Flint I retreated. As we collided, four buffalo crashed through the thicket as though it were paper.

"What's the idea?" said Flint, with annoyance.

"Musswa motioned me back," I answered.

"Well, down here that motion means just the reverse," he explained. "Musswa was beckoning to you to come forward as quick as you could."

"All right, then, it's understood," I continued. "When I'm motioned violently away in the future, I'll come forward, but under protest, for I don't care for this kind of inversion."

The heat was becoming oppressive. To move caused perspiration to stream from one. To go through the acrobatics involved in bending down to pass under branches three feet from the ground, with a heavy gun in one hand, caused one to gush like a fountain.

The next stalk was long and tedious. It was with difficulty we found a fresh spoor, and then it was a long stern chase before we came up with its originator. Just as we seemed to be reaching a crisis, there was the slightest click from the rear, as the metal end of an Elgayo spear tapped a stone. The crash of the buffalo followed instantly, but it did not move far. For an eternity, we crouched, hardly daring to breathe, then moved forward once more. Three minutes later Musswa was pointing

like a bronze bird-dog. His interest lay in some shadows under a bush. To me they were only shadows. I could see no living thing. Then, the buffalo suddenly moved, and became clearly visible, but alas! too late, for in the wink of an eye it had vanished, and with it my chance for fame as a marksman. The laboriously accomplished stalk was wasted. Musswa stood biting the knuckle of his forefinger, his lower jaw trembling with vexation.

"Why didn't you shoot?" said Flint. "He stood there as plain as day, begging for it—not over twenty yards."

"Sorry," I replied, "but I simply cannot see these things. To me they are as invisible as disembodied spirits. I don't believe I care for any more phantom shooting. For the present, I throw up the sponge on buffalo."

"They're bluish black," said Flint, "and very difficult to see in the shadows. Next time, it'll be easy." He was the most optimistic fellow!

Save for the trackers, who were not working on a contingent basis, we were now the only human beings left in the bush. The rabble, that had followed us with so much friendly interest all the

morning with nothing but praise on its lips, had vanished like smoke as soon as it became clear that I was a dud. At once, I ceased to be of interest. Even the most obnoxious and pot-bellied infant turned his back on me.

Flint had ordered our camp moved to the River Ndo during the morning, so for the River Ndo we started, cutting cross-lots to the point where we might expect to find the "boys." The fundamental fact of this valley now became heat,—heat,—heat. It beat down on the parched ground about us, billowing in waves that caused the world to appear as distorted as though viewed in a badly warped mirror.

In the middle of a dense thicket sprinkled with good sized mimosa trees, we came on unmistakably fresh signs of elephant. There, on a mimosa, about eight feet from the ground, was the spot where one had scratched himself. It was an epic scratching resulting in the permanent disfigurement of the mimosa. Beneath the tree, the ground gave evidence of where it had stood rocking on the huge columns that served it as legs.

Immediately we became tense, expecting the next moment to see eleven feet of grey pachyderm

observing us over the tops of the bushes. The trackers left to locate the "ndovu." They were certain he was not far off. They always are. For an hour we sat there, and slowly leaked away. It was like the interior of a fireless cooker. At length Gregg wiped the perspiration from his forehead and remarked:

"By jove, I don't believe those rascals intend to come back."

Waves of giddiness were sweeping over me. The only thing in the world of any importance at the moment was water; water, so negative when present, yet so conspicuous in its absence; clear, cool water. "I throw up the sponge on elephants, too," I said weakly. "I've lost enough moisture this morning to float a gondola. It has had a serious effect on my metabolism,—not to mention my wrist watch. I have no more health to waste."

We started through the bush toward camp. In half an hour, we met one of the Elgayo guides. He was leaning against a tree scrubbing his teeth with a piece of stick. Flint addressed him in broken Elgayo, and reported.

"He says he thought the others were coming back to tell us that the elephant had decamped. Di-

vided responsibility. Consequently nobody came. He adds that if it's only water you want, he'll show you a clear, cool spring, a little way from here, fit for a sultan."

Here was news! My tongue felt like a piece of red hot, patent leather. We staggered on, not a foot less than three miles. The barrels of our rifles were so hot we could not touch them. So were the little brass air-vents on the top of our helmets. Just as I was declaring to myself for the thirtieth time that this could not go on, the boy wheeled around a clump of bushes and, with undisguised pride, uttered the words; "Magi sana." Before our eyes lay his crystal spring.

It was about ten feet square, and shallow. We could see this, for as we approached two dozen goats removed themselves from its grateful coolness leaving the water the color of burnt umber. As the agitation subsided, a remarkable green scum rose to the surface, rather beautiful in a way, all opalescent and shimmery. Two bull-frogs made graceful swan dives into its opaque fastnesses. Living jelly-like growths paddled leisurely hither and thither about their amœbic affairs. It would have taken a trained scientist a year to tabulate

the various categories of protoplasmic life that wriggled about in that small aqueous world.

The Elgayo waded to its center and, with half a gourd carried at his waist, scooped up beaker after beaker of this equatorial "hootch." Before making a dip, however, he carefully splashed away the opalescent green scum. Evidently this was vegetable matter which he did not consider as part of the beverage.

He held out a gourd-ful, with a pleasant smile, and said: "Mzuri."

"It looks like vegetable soup," I said, "but that's as far as the resemblance carries. I'm not drinking hemlock today, thank you." I turned sadly away.

Like an inebriate I proceeded. What our objective was had long since faded from my mind. We passed hundreds of guinea fowl. Flint killed one with a stick. With dull eyes, I stood doggedly by, an uninterested spectator. We passed through acres of strange looking plants. "Wild castor oil," he said over his shoulder.

"Maybe it is—but it's no wilder than I am," I gasped. "Of course it wouldn't be a patch of watermelons."

Wild sisal—everything seemed wild and coy in

this desolate place—caused us to wind to and fro as in a maze. Then we entered a grove of mimosas, came to the edge of a small bluff and looked down on a muddy trickle—the River Ndo.

"Here's where we camp," Flint remarked, throwing himself on the ground. "I can't imagine where those black rascals are. They should have been here an hour ago." It was 4 P. M., twelve hours since breakfast, nearly dinner-time, and we hadn't even had lunch yet.

"At any rate," I said, "I drink here, mud or no mud," and started down the bank.

"Sorry," said Flint, "it must be boiled first. No doubt this seems cruel, but it's absolutely necessary."

Utterly crushed, I sat in a patch of shade and gloomily watched "beetles rolling balls of dung," of which there were a multitude, highly skilled in their futile vocation, and served with an inexhaustible supply of raw material.

"How Walt Whitman would have loved this," I remarked. "They're in his poem 'Leaves of Grass',—the beetles, I mean." I believe I was becoming light-headed.

"Doubtless," replied Flint, giving me an intent

look, "but here come the porters and the water-bottles. Would a lemon squash take your mind off the beetles?"

In no time a fire was going, our ground sheet had been thrown over a ridge pole, our beds were up, we had bathed, and were lingering over an excellent dinner.

"With your approval," remarked Flint, "we'll let the buffalo rest for a day or so, and in the morning try our luck with rhino."

"It sounds all right," I answered. "All I ask is to be shown something I can see. I'm tired of spiritualistic séances."

"You'll see rhino quite easily," said Flint.

The air grew colder, the stars came out in scintillating myriads; far away, near the top of the Kamasia Mountains, a pinhead of light flickered from a native village. We turned in. The last thing I was conscious of was a wave of sound coming from a vague distance to end in three great reverberating roars.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Lion," said Flint.

XV

IN the freshness of the dawn we set out after rhino. The air was filled with the cooing of wild doves, and the persistent liquid notes of some feathered vocalist unknown to me. A penetrating coolness urged one to move briskly, and calculate with interest when the first rays of the sun might be expected to appear above the crest of the Kamasia Range. It was ridiculous, yet the cold at the bottom of this Rift Valley racked one. At noon the thermometer might register one hundred and ten degrees, then, towards dawn the mercury would become depraved and slink as low as fifty-five degrees in its criminal career. One lay in his Jaeger blankets and shivered. Visions of skiis and snowshoes mingled with the imagined sounds of sleigh bells when one woke to consciousness. Yet, within a few hours, the heat would once again become unbearable; the chills of the preceding night forgotten. It was a kaleidoscopic adventure in contraction and expansion.

We crossed the River Ndo—pronounced as though one had a hard cold—and entered the bush. A large, grey monkey sat on the limb of a tree, his back lazily propped against its trunk. One leg swung idly to and fro in a manner expressive of complete boredom. At intervals he scratched his head feebly. He was waiting to get thawed out by the sun.

Five minutes from camp, we crossed the trails of our first rhino—two of them—returning from the river to the thicker bush which skirted the mountains. The size of these impressions disturbed me. They were bigger than soup plates—a favorite unit of measurement among scientists—while the weight of the animals was evidenced by the fact that they were impressed three or four inches into the unresponsive ground. Moisture still oozed from them, while, in the depressions leaves and grasses were crushed flat enough for the memory book of the most fastidious.

Here Gregg left us. "You follow these blighters," he said. "I'm going down the valley after buffalo."

In and out among the clumps of bushes we stealthily followed the tracks. Then I was peering

across a little glade at two colossal grey bodies. It was all so matter-of-fact and casual it seemed preposterous. Above them fluttered some small birds. "Rhino birds," whispered Flint. The sun was just peeping over the mountains, transforming the steely light into warmer tones. The doves still hurled their soft challenge to the dawn.

My knees began to shake like a couple of aspens. Great wabbly shivers ran up and down my spine. It was not precisely what I had expected. There was a sinister insolence about the huge bodies that filled me with foreboding.

"Shoot,—shoot," hissed Flint.

"Do you really think I ought to?" I whispered. Opening hostilities in this cold-blooded way seemed little short of courting death.

"Well, what-the-hell did you come down here for?" he whispered back.

I shot.

Afterwards I realized I had merely pulled the trigger, holding the gun in my hands like the nozzle of a hose. The rhinos relieved themselves of two very authentic snorts and vanished. They were just as frightened as I was. It was laughable.

"Sorry," I said to Flint.

"Carry on," he answered, "and next time don't use that rifle as though it was a bean-blower."

Through a series of small grassy glades we cautiously picked our way. Then Flint grabbed my arm, and pointed. There, on the opposite side of a small open space, stood another pair of these slab-sided angels. They seemed as plentiful as rabbits. In distance they were twenty-two yards from where we stood. Afterwards I measured it. Alert, noses in air, they posed, intent on locating the danger some instinct warned them was approaching.

"Now," whispered Flint.

"They're nothing but big bluffs," I murmured, and pulled the trigger.

The bullet struck one in the chest—I could see the spot—there was a spurt of blood. With a snort that sounded like a dozen Mikado engines exhausting steam, it whirled with the agility of a cat and charged straight at us. From that moment my actions were guided by forces over which I had no control. I threw down my gun and ran. The rhino appeared to be on top of me. In fact he was —right on top of me. Twenty-seven and a half inches of horn was thirsting for my blood. I ran. In three strides I was tangled inextricably in a

thorn-apple tree, abundantly decorated with needle-like thorns an inch and a half long. I heard Flint shoot. "What part of me will it enter first?" I wondered. "How will it feel?" Oh! Jeptha, Judge of Israel, how scared I was! For what seemed an age I floundered, leaving a very tender and defenseless portion of my anatomy exposed. Now I understood why the wart hogs had compromised with their dignity and entered their holes backward. Then Flint said: "He's gone. Badly wounded. Come on."

With difficulty I managed to unhook myself. Indicating my running away, Flint remarked: "The very worst thing you could do."

"It was natural and spontaneous, at any rate," I answered unashamed,—it seemed the better policy.

"Well," he said, "the next time it happens try not to be natural."

We followed the bloody spoor in and out among the bushes. Then, as we stood in the shadow of a thicket, the terrible explosive snort of the wounded rhino filled the air on its opposite side. Again, the impulse to run was well-nigh irresistible, but this time I controlled it. There was no place to run.

Cautiously we edged around the bush. The head and shoulders of the beast became visible through the leaves. It was a very sick rhino. Flint and I both shot. Without a sound, it sank to the ground—dead. To see a monumental animal full of vibrant life dashing about in a frenzy of rage one moment, and the next, abruptly sinking to the earth, an inert lifeless mass, is shocking. From a condition of pandemonium, the world became suddenly still with the dramatic stillness that follows a catastrophe.

From various dingles and copses the boys appeared full of delight at the thought of the sensual pleasure in store for them. Here were tons of meat, Simba, named for the lion, was the custodian of my kodak. It weighed fourteen pounds. At the moment the rhino snorted there had been a general scattering. Simba had vanished as though the earth had opened to receive him. Now we called to him. From above our heads, he answered faintly. He was perched on the top of a thorn-tree twenty feet from the ground, the kodak still gripped in one hand. That he had made it in one jump there could be no doubt, for there was not a scratch on him.

"He's named for a lion," I said to Flint, "and

yet he's no braver than I am, and I'm not even named for a billy goat."

"It's the same here as anywhere else," Flint replied. "You can place but little reliance in names."

We turned our attention to the rhino. It was a female; an old, wrinkled, unprepossessing female, with a horn over twenty-seven inches long which gave her a decidedly shrewish look. Her body was stuccoed with a quarter of an inch of mud, to protect it from flies—African rouge. Her eyes were small and piggish and, but for the horny growth, her snout would certainly be termed porcine. Her length, from the tip of the nose to the root of the tail, a little over ten feet. At the withers, she stood four feet eight inches in her bare feet before she dropped for the last time. Who her father and mother were, I was unable to ascertain. This seemed unfortunate inasmuch as otherwise I was going into such intimate detail. Her skin was an inch and a quarter thick, and hung about her in loose and baggy folds. Although no uglier beast lives, we stood about and admired it for an hour, as though it was a new baby. At least it was no homelier. We sat on it, walked on it, pinched it, took all

manner of liberties with it, while the grinning boys who formed our audience regarded us in silence. The huge corpse lay still, yielding pitifully to the liberties we took.

At length we tired of prying into its personal peculiarities. From stem to stern we had become thoroughly familiar with the "herbivorous perissodactyl." The boys were now turned loose on the cadaver. Like a group of first year medical students, they leapt upon it. One hour later, a huge framework of bones was the only visible evidence that the crime had ever been committed. The following morning a moist spot on the ground alone identified the scene of the murder. The hyenas, jackals, small furry things, beetles and lice had licked the platter clean. It was at once depressing yet reassuringly antiseptic.

As Flint and I sat in the shade watching that huge pile of meat melt away like red snow in the white sun, a boy burst through the bushes breathless and exhausted. The muscles of his legs were taut. His knee-caps trembled ridiculously. His mouth worked and grimaced uncontrollably. Clearly he had traveled fast, and the memory of something disturbing still lingered. He spoke to

Flint haltingly, between gulps for air, in the most approved, melodramatic manner.

"Gregg is in a herd of elephants," said Flint. "He's out of hard-nose ammunition. Maybe we'll get a shot. Come on."

For an hour and a half, we marched through the blistering heat watching the legs of this black Paul Revere rise and fall mechanically. Then, suddenly rounding a bush, we came on Gregg sitting under a tree solemnly watching a very sick bull elephant rock slowly back and forth on trembling legs. Almost at once, it staggered and fell, burying a tusk deeply into the hard earth.

"There were twelve of them," said Gregg without emotion, as we came up. "They surrounded me as quietly as mice. Five minutes before I had met a rhino face to face on a narrow trail. He rushed past me so close the mud on his ribs was scraped off on my jacket. After he went everything was quiet. When I looked around again elephants were all over the place. This tusker was twelve yards away. There hadn't been a sound. The boys ran. I don't blame them. I tell you elephants were all over the place. I gave this one the brain shot, heart shot, tail shot and ran out of 'hard nose'—anyway, I

couldn't remember any other places to shoot him. There he is. He's dead," and he regarded the huge carcass with an incredulous look.

There was no doubt of it,—dead he most certainly was. One could assert it without the least fear of exaggerating. Five tons of bone and meat lay limp on the ground with no further interest in antiquity or futurity. Regarded from a distance, it was only a rather revolting mountain of flesh already beginning to wage its losing battle with the sun's vertical rays. But, as we proceeded on a sightseeing tour over the huge corpse, we came to appreciate it in all its mechanical perfection.

The rhino, weighing nearly two tons, faded into insignificance, as we proceeded to explore this five-ton cadaver. It was a Gargantuan autopsy; a cosmic post-mortem, involving a knowledge of Swiss mountaineering, the Roman catacombs and the inner workings of Armour and Company.

And with what different emotions each of us seemed to regard this permanently relaxed hulk! In the eyes of Gregg, it was merely the corpse of an enemy slain in mortal combat. The keen eyes of Flint saw in it only a hundred pounds of ivory—

fifteen hundred shillings, and his eyes found it a pleasing sight. To the rolling eyes of the vociferous swarm of Elgayo and Kamasia, that had appeared as if by magic as soon as the old bull had crashed to earth, it bulked as heaven-sent meat—red, bleeding meat—Mzuri! Lastly, my unsophisticated eyes regarded it with amazement—as the most curious animal left in the world today. I saw the huge proboscis attached to a massive head, in turn set firmly on a great, cylindrical body, from which projected legs like huge columns ending in flat, circular feet. I saw ears measuring ten feet from tip to tip, small short-sighted eyes and, as an inconsequential climax, a tiny tail that would have been a source of mortification to an anæmic rat. I saw a grey wrinkled skin, as loose as the morals of Sodom and Gomorrah, lying in such folds and puckers that one was quite willing to believe it had been slept in nightly for a hundred years. This baggy integument had plainly never known goose, mangle or pressing-iron. It was designed with a view to service and comfort.

The elephant is a big subject. One is tempted to linger over it—too long perhaps. But there's a middle ground—that section between the trunk

and the tail, where Gregg, Flint and I sat, each thinking his own thoughts.

The sun blazed down cruelly. We slid off the corpse and made some measurements. It would have stood ten feet four at the shoulder—our specimen. Its feet were fifty inches in circumference, and it seemed to me that, if it had wanted to reach something down out of a tree, it surely could have poked the end of its nose about twenty-eight feet up into the branches. This is a lot of nose to stick into another person's business.

From the end of the tail we carefully garnered the only hairs on the barren hulk, great spines, the thickness of the G string on a zither. These hairs woven into bracelets and rings form very potent charms. They were plucked with due reverence. The poor thing's feet were dismembered to serve as umbrella-racks at some later day. The ears were removed for table tops. The trunk was unhinged for steaks. With a hatchet, carried for that purpose, the tusks were chopped out—white gold, at the moment slightly incarnadined. The marrow within them was withdrawn, and handed to a Kamasia Chief. Then Gregg blew a whistle, indicating to the hundred odd black men swarming

about us that we were through viewing the remains. The corpse was theirs.

We possessed half a dozen hairs, four feet, a pair of ears and a hundred pounds of ivory. The elephant possessed immortality. Our trophies and tokens bore a pitifully small relation to the mountainous bulk that had shaken the earth with its fall a half hour previously. Some day soon there will be no more elephants—the strangest of living animals will have vanished—and how many people will miss them or even appreciate that they have gone? Don't ask me!

We now witnessed a prehistoric orgy, in which men became beasts. At the sound of Gregg's whistle, stripped to the skin, the black scavengers leapt on the carcass with ghoulish eagerness. Immediately it became invisible beneath half a hundred savages, lusting for meat. Knee-deep in filth, they plunged and staggered, hacking off such bits as they could lay hold on. Meat! Raw, red meat! They had degenerated into animals fighting for filthy scraps. It was naked savagery. Not a single element of humor relieved its dreadfulness. Save for its bony structure, the elephant had been trodden flat. The sun blazed down. The erst-

while peaceful glade became an inferno filled with things that had once been men, covered with blood and sweat. Rolling eyeballs looked out of grimacing faces. The primeval blood lust held them in its grip.

As those at work on the carcass tore loose a handful of meat, they scaled it over the heads of the others to a confederate waiting on the side lines, either a woman or an old man, who immediately impaled it on a sharpened stick—gobs of elephant meat en brouchette—or thrust it into baskets of wild sisal woven on the spot.

Some marabou storks flew over us, cocking their heads with puzzled curiosity at the strange turmoil. Far up in the blue, specks appeared slowly traversing in huge circles. Vultures! Little did they realize, at the rate things were progressing, that long before their turn came naught would remain but a few inarticulated bones and a moist patch of ground. Fortunes of war! A short distance away a grey monkey, with the face of a disillusioned poet, sat on a limb and swung his legs. One could almost imagine him remarking: "Thank God, I'm a vegetarian."

By now half the participants in this red carnival

were themselves slashed and bleeding from impulsive and unneighborly handling of knife and spear. Four or five boys crawled into the carcass beneath the ribs. They were the worst sufferers, as the knives of those above broke through to kiss their black skins.

Soon came the turn of the old men who had been nervously hovering on the side lines like obscene birds. Lacking the strength to engage in the mêlée, they had been forced to content themselves with senile hopping up and down. Now came their turn—nothing was left but the bones.

A week later I watched a flock of vultures perform an identical ceremony over the body of a hartebeeste weighing three hundred and fifty pounds. In every particular the procedure was the same. The carcass was rushed hither and thither like a red football. Late arrivals made running jumps to the top of the pile, using beak and claw to assist them down to the center of interest. In fifteen minutes, by a fairly accurate watch, including one interruption, when it looked as though there was an off side play, all that remained of that hartebeeste were the ribs. The vultures stood about in a condition of groggy repletion.

The elephant carcass was buried under a seething mass of half-delirious savages.

The vultures rushed the carcass about like a crimson football.

Life revolved in a gory cycle in this land where the sun's rays are vertical—men and vultures, they were birds of a feather!

Gregg had made an arrangement with a Kamasia Chief whereby, in consideration for meat, he would see our ivory and trophies carried to camp. Now, as the elephant carcass melted away, so did the savages, until it was clear that soon both would be a negative quantity. Gregg remonstrated with the Chief, reminded him of his bargain, blew his whistle, said "What next!" and waved his arms, but the savages continued to melt away. Then he got mad, and fetched the Chief three rousing kicks. This immediately cleared the atmosphere—also the landscape. In thirty seconds, except for our own boys, there was not a native to be seen, and all that remained of our elephant was a skeleton that looked like the framework of a fifteen-story office building. By rummaging through the bushes, we rounded up a handful of ossified old men, too stiff to run, and, loading our odds and ends on their palsied backs, returned to camp.

XVI

FOR ten days we lived a life of primeval simplicity at the bottom of the Rift Valley, chilled to the bone by night, parboiled by day. We came to know to the full the meaning of Mr. Cobb's term "automatic pores." They opened and shut with such mechanical accuracy that we consulted them instead of our watches.

Here we saw no white face, yet we were not alone. About us the dusky inheritors of this sanguinary land pursued the savage vocations of their forefathers. And from the manner in which they sprang from the bushes in well-organized platoons whenever there was a carcass to be disposed of, it was obvious that there was never a moment, night or day, when we were not the cynosure of their rolling eyes. From meat-eating beetles to marabou storks and hyenas, from Elgayo valetudinarians to leopards, every move we made appeared to be regarded with an intent, hedonistic interest. Each leaf, copse and dingle, as well as the blue arc of

heaven, concealed a predatory eye, that lit with an unholy glee as we unleashed the chaos of death. As the smell of blood tainted the crystalline air, one could almost hear the hymn of thanks leaving the throats of those who lived on its gruesome by-products.

We saw eight more rhino during our stay; the farthest about twenty yards distant—the nearest nine. But I'm happy to say no further homicides were attempted either by them or us. As time went on, the terror they at first inspired evaporated somewhat. We began to realize that they were probably more scared than we were. Their charges, when they occurred, being half-blind rushes directed toward the crack of a rifle or taint in the air. Reflex actions, entirely automatic. They might miss their objective by a matter of many yards, but on they would go for three or four miles wondering what it was all about. Two minutes after launching a most vicious rush they were completely fogged as to its inner meaning. Vague, befuddled throwbacks—but dangerous enough. Day after day we played tag with them in the bushes—inconclusive games, full of snorts and crashings.

One morning, just as the sun was beginning to

shoot his beam—six thirty A.M. by my pores, we swung around a bush, to face a surly, dyspeptic bull, with a beak of horn on his piggish nose that looked like the spire of the Cologne Cathedral. He was performing his morning ablutions, and resented the intrusion on his privacy—which of us had right of way will never be known. Automatically, I shot into the sky; acrobatically, he turned a complete somersault in the air to land on his back with a thump that forced the wind from his lungs in a stentorian belch. Without even pausing to say: "pardon me," he rolled awkwardly to his feet and vanished through the bushes after the manner of an inebriate. Several small thickets that waved from his horn gave him an appearance positively festive. Before he finally disappeared, he uttered an amazing hiccough as a parting salutation. Except for the one that so far forgot himself as to charge, the rest ran—to a rhino. If they hadn't, I would have, and made no secret of it. Flint was beginning to despair of me.

"If you run you'll get yourself killed and ruin my reputation," he would wail.

"I'll get myself killed, if I don't—so why not die like an athlete," I generally answered, and always

went on to tell him of P. T. Barnum, who said "that, in case of danger, the first arms he looked to were his legs."

As a matter of fact, by now I had really lost my taste for running, and harped on this theme merely as a means of annoying Flint.

On several occasions elephant were about us, but we seemed to throw off a particularly pungent effluvia, for they winded us at once and left for other parts.

It was a life of alarms. As we stole along game trails, hard-packed by the restless feet of buffalo, elephant, rhino and the daintier extremities of the buck, each bush and shadow seemed to harbor a menace. Yet our nerves throve on it, and cried out for more.

Day after day the sun rose in a cloudless sky of cerulean blue—at least I believe it was cerulean, but I had carelessly left my dictionary at Rawson's so will never know for sure. Only once did we see a cloud. It came up the valley at supper time. It was not a nice cloud, but very black and full of wind, and blew down the groundsheet that served as our tent. In the dark we were obliged to rig it up again quite sketchily. During the night it rained

freely for half an hour. Something dank and moist pressed down on my face as I slept. I awoke to find that about five gallons of water had gathered in the canvas over me, and hung there suspended as though it were a baby's bath-tub. By careful nursing, I was able to ease it over into a pocket situated above Flint. He uttered a few words that I would hesitate to print even in this modern age and passed it on into a shallow depression over Gregg. There was a hole here, so that's the end of the story. The stars were now out and the valley was bathed in the silvery effulgence of a tropical moon, but it was raining for Gregg. At length, with a cry of anguish, he yelled:

"Will some gentleman be kind enough to hand me a bally umbrella?"

"Stick your head in an elephant's foot," said Flint. "There are four of them lying about," and passed into a dreamless slumber.

Our camp had become a thriving community. Each night saw a dozen fires surrounded by fifty boys enjoying the sensation of fullness sequent on crowding the stomach with much meat. Our party had been augmented by most of the able-bodied members of the Elgayo Village. They had come to

regard us as natural curiosities. To be obliged to walk over from the village each morning to view us was irksome, so, in a body, they moved to our camp. By night, they formed an outer fringe about our Spartan precincts; by day, an appreciative audience. Though Spartan, our camp was comfortable. Under a suspended ground-sheet reposed three cots and three tin boxes. That was all there was to it. Both ends of this "bastard chateau" were open to the wind and congested with the feet of elephant and rhino, blood-stained ivory and horn. Suspended from the ridge-pole to secure it from the dogs, and lending a touch of "homeness" to the scene, swung a hunk of elephant's trunk;—it served as substitute for strings of onions and flitches of bacon. And a good generous fry of elephant's trunk is not to be sneezed at. It's far from unsucculent and not at all insalubrious. Moreover, our larder was plentifully supplied with canned soup and fish, fresh eggs, chicken, the meat of the small buck, guinea fowl, partridge, potatoes, onions, carrots, fresh scones daily, oranges, fresh figs and jams. The one surprising lack was the traditional canned beans of the great open spaces. They weren't to be had in Africa, and somehow without

beans the spaces did not seem to measure up quite so vast or nearly so open. But, though beanless, we were very comfortable.

In moments of idleness, we lay luxuriously on our cots and ordered up the young men to throw spears for our amusement—for an orange they'd throw a spear a half a mile. They threw their short swords. They threw their rungas. They'd throw anything that was not nailed down. With muscles like piano wires their bodies were tall and beautifully molded. Their personal adornment was of the meagerest. To the front, a brief square of cotton sheeting hung from the waist; to the rear, an odd heart-shaped piece of calf skin. This served a double purpose. As they walked, it flapped behind them in the breeze to lend an air of jauntiness to their carriage. When they squatted on their heels, as was their custom, it was seized and drawn taut over their posteriors to prevent the intrusion therein of the ubiquitous thorns. They could not be taken in jest—these thorns. Sharp as needles and an inch and a half long, they lay scattered over the ground in extravagant profusion. We did not have to sit on more than one ourselves to appreciate the utility concealed in these flapping tail pieces.

Some wore an ivory bracelet above the elbow, from which dangled a small horn of vile stuff. Unless they were stalking game, sandals of skin protected the soles of their feet. But, even shielded thus, an occasional thorn plunged half an inch into their horny extremities. Then they paused with the wounded foot suspended in the air and, from three holes drilled in the top of the ear, unfastened a large safety pin, if they were opulent; if not, some other pointed implement, such as a nail, with which they picked out the thorn. Their feet were a continual source of annoyance to them. When making a stalk, they were constantly halting in sudden grotesque postures for the purpose of removing foreign material. It was an agony to watch them. Around an ankle they wore a circlet of small bells to warn one another of their whereabouts.

Into the kinks of their scant tightly curled hair they twisted sheeps' wool, spinning it into long strands, which were gathered at the back of their necks into queues and fitted into tight containers of skin. This created the illusion that they were the possessors of long luxuriant, but very greasy, locks, and gratified their craving for a hirsute appearance. Unable to grow hair, hair became the thing they

most coveted. To them it seemed the visible symbol of superhuman qualities. Hence, one of the reasons for the dense, bosky crop of chin arbutus affected by the old school explorer or elephant hunter. The other, lay in the fact that in those far off days King C. Gillette was nothing but a struggling youth, fighting the economic battle for bread, yet spending all his spare time hanging around barber-shops pondering the problem of the nude chin—An Archimedes of the soap-suds. The tastes of other boys ran in different channels. If they were fortunate enough to come into the possession of a fair-sized section of a buffalo's stomach—buffalo tripe in a word, they fashioned it into wigs rough side out. These were smeared with oil and red clay, and never removed.

Many of the men pierced their ear lobes, as well as the women. The worst disgrace that could befall such a one was to appear with the strand of his ear lobe broken. It was visible evidence that his opponent in some physical encounter had hooked a finger therein and snapped it. Lobes that touched across the top of the skull were considered well stretched.

They were grab-bags of oddities. One never tired

of watching them. And by the same token, they never tired of watching us. Our curiosity was mutual. Of an evening we diverted ourselves, as they sat about us in a solemn circle, by enquiring into their ways of life.

In positive qualities, they were not rich. They could count up to five, employing the term "many" to greater quantities. They knew every animal and its habits, in their narrow range of valley. They were skillful and accurate in the use of their weapons. And a holy horror of manual labor in all its ramifications obsessed them. This balanced the budget of their virtues.

Their negative qualities were more interesting. They represented the negation of civilization. They had no history. No minutes of the last meeting had ever been kept. Their fathers had never told them stories of their grandfathers. Their mothers had never crooned them songs of other days. Thoughts of the whenceness and whitherishness of their tribal life never stirred the voids of their black craniums. They had no myths, legends or folk lore. A few fables and cryptic sayings, attributed to the masai, floated about, but most of them smacked of Birmingham, England, or car-

ried the romantic touch of clerical missionaries. These Elgayo that sat about our campfire possessed none.

They visualized no immortality. When a man was dead—he was dead, and the more defunct he was, the greater their lack of interest in him. It was a lonesome place for a corpse. There being no past and no future, they devoted their entire time to the present. Thus, anyone unfortunate enough to be cut down by the Grim Reaper vanished completely out of the picture. They were rich in Time, but had no use for it; alas, for wants they had none. They could not spend it fast enough. It compounded on their hands and smothered them. Clothes and shelter were unnecessary, while food fell into their mouths with benevolent accuracy.

They dwelt in small beehive huts of wattles and grass. Within, a flat stone served as a fire-place, while a bed of woven branches, raised high enough to clear the water during the rains, periodically received their languid limbs. A skin or two, and a few gourds for culinary purposes, might be strewn carelessly about. The women and children slept where they could, for they were only chattels. At this time, a reasonably sound wife cost the exorbi-

tant sum of four goats, one slightly mouldy, less, one very mouldy, still less, and bitter were the complaints against the high cost of matrimony. Not long since one could have come by an inky bride for two goats. Unfortunately, here there were no Bureaus of Economic Research to forecast trends and prices, so the prospective bridegroom was left a rudderless hulk in unchartered financial seas. One hesitates to picture the mental condition of a thrifty, well-meaning lad, who had paid four sleek goats for a plump wife, only to have the wife-market crack wide open. Such losses were deductible from no income tax. Often the market became flooded with both wives and goats at the same moment, causing a compound sinking in the purchasing value of the goat. Capitalists then became hysterical, showing they are no different under the Equator than elsewhere. For years Professor Fisher has been trying to "balance the dollar." If he could balance the goat, he would be a Chief in Africa. This much may be said in favor of goatish currency. It can be touched, tasted and smelt. When a man is referred to as smelling like a million dollars—it means something. Much might be said of this curious relationship between wives and goats.

Many allusions might be drawn, many analogies pointed out. But the net result would be, someone would get into trouble. Personally, I wash my hands of the whole affair. So, then, these chattel wives, in many cases but fourteen or fifteen years old, together with the juvenile population, perform all the necessary manual labor. They grow the grain, carry water, prepare meals, tend the flocks and rear the children in rather a hazy fashion. They put what little "go" there was in lives otherwise almost null and void.

But to return to the ancestral dwellings. Next the living hut, a small wicker granary was elevated on stilts, to remove it from the rains, and insulated from thievish rodents by flat stones. A small hedge of thorns encircled the farmstead. Into the small enclosure thus formed, the goats and sheep—as was proper where the currency has legs—were deposited nightly in a safekeeping account. The main entrance to these "bomas" gave onto a dung heap the size of which marked the opulence of the tenant. Any sunrise, a woman worth four goats might be seen driving forty goats—or ten potential wives—out to forage. Yet, on their part, there was no visible jealousy of these symbolical competitors.

A reasonably sound wife costs four goats.

In a bend of the river they scratched the soil with crooked sticks.

Unemotional, stolid, unjoyful female Mormons, they proceeded about their business. To them the world was not a harmonious paradise full of seductive delights, but a drab cell full of back-breaking drudgery.

Yet, in spite of this, they practiced several coquettish aids to beauty. Why—it would be hard to say,—save that they were women. They pierced their ear lobes. They spread the two front teeth of the upper jaw, leaving a chic but gaping hole for uses best known to themselves,—a custom surviving possibly from the days of lock-jaw epidemics, that scourge of woman containing nine stings. They bound their upper arms, and the calves of their legs, in tight sheaths of quarter-inch brass wire. So snugly was it applied, the muscles atrophied and the flesh became ulcerous where the bands terminated. Their knees were unbendable, so they bore their heavy loads with a waddling, duck-like motion, painful to witness. Nevertheless, they did not know the meaning of fatigue. Around their necks some wore many concentric circles of wire in the nature of a ruff. Around the waists of most hung a small piece of coarse cotton sheeting. A greasy skin completed their attire. It was their own.

In a bend of the river, flooded each year during the heavy rains and left coated with a thick emulsion of silt, these women and children scratched the soil with crooked sticks, and there, under the debonair supervision of nature and the wart hogs, the processes of budding, blossoming and fructifying were annually completed. Corn was grown, and wembi, a grain the size of very small peas. From the granaries within each "boma" the grain was removed at intervals to be ground between two stones, an "upper and a nether", rubbed together by hand. The result was a coarse flour, heavily charged with abrasive material. Such a product as any reputable manufacturer of carborundum might have been proud to stencil his name on. Surely these people were living on a plane no higher than that of the first agriculturalists, who scratched the soil with sharp sticks. Why, from an even start, they had descended the ladder, while we had climbed, was hard to comprehend. In fact, it was all so foggy to me that I never mentioned it to my companions at all, but satisfied myself with the explanation that life here could be sustained without work. The heat soon stultified ambition. So, for centuries, men had slipped backwards in this arid vale. I even went

further, and told myself that white men permanently transplanted into this same environment would likewise slip rather badly in a few generations, if they did not entirely ruin the experiment in the meantime by exterminating each other in a general massacre.

Sickness and death, gruesome enough in luxurious surroundings, took on an even more pallid aspect in this sun-baked valley. When one sickened, we were informed, and had the good grace to die promptly, he was allowed the gratification of a demise under his own roof and the pomp of an interment in the dung heap, the rearing of which had constituted his life's work. But should he sicken, and linger inconsiderately, his quaking body was promptly dragged into the woods at dusk and left there. By morning the prowlers of the night had given him every mortuary attention, but a Masonic burial. Whether this method of cheating both doctor and undertaker was the result of some ancient experience with contagious diseases would be only a wild guess on my part—but let us make it. What harm is done? The result of all this was, however, that imaginary illnesses were unknown in Mutei. A man either used a high-proof Christian Science,

or Couéd himself until he fell with the death rattle in his throat. They may have been lying to me, these boys. Many people, ordinarily highly cultured and truthful, lie to me. They seem to feel it their duty to supply me with fiction. But these boys seemed too ignorant to enjoy the pleasure of artistic lying.

We arrived at terms of great intimacy with this desolate Elgayo Village, perched on the flank of the Escarpment. More so, as the faces of its various inhabitants emerged from the mass to become living personalities. All manner of men were in evidence—wise counselors, knaves and clowns, fastidious dandies and hopeless failures. In this respect, they did not differ from any other community. But, sad to relate, long before we had labeled the last of them we were on our way once more.

XVII

ONE evening, towards the end of our stay, a lithe savage presented himself at our fire. In due season, Flint conversed with him briefly.

"He says he can take us up to buffalo, so close we can twist their tails," he reported, "and when I enquired as to his qualifications, he answered that 'once he had killed a white man', his conception of the quintessence of bravery."

"Give him a chance," I said. "He can take Gregg out in the morning."

He did, and Gregg killed a buffalo. To me, it was nothing short of a miracle. A snap shot in the brush at a grey streak. The event caused a great furor in the neighborhood. For a brief moment, it appeared as if another half ton of meat was about to melt away under the assault of glutinous natives. But, this time, our own boys were directed to hold the post-mortem.

For convenience, we moved a light camp to the edge of this patch of "bush," the lurking place of so many buffalo, determined that our last night should be spent near the scene of action and dawn see us sleuthing an old bull. Sleuthing was becoming second nature to us. We skulked in our sleep. Bent double to simulate an antelope, we tiptoed about all day. If we went out for a pull at the water-bottle, we slid from shadow to shadow, and finally pounced on it like a panther. We stalked our food at meals. We could not drink a cup of tea without acting like a house detective. The boys cleared away a space large enough for the lacerated ground-sheet and a cook fire, and we settled down.

As night fell, the air was filled with a great humming that vibrated in such volume one could not hear the sound of his own voice. Our bivouac was not far from Lake Kammarok. "Mosquitoes," said Flint abruptly. It sounded like about ten million canary birds to me, but we let it go at "mosquitoes." It lent an eery note to surroundings already somewhat sepulchral. A full moon rose, sending mellow beams through the tangle of brush to carpet the small open spaces with fan-

tastic traceries. We lounged on our cots, and talked of America, always America—a land of absorbing interest to Flint on other grounds than prohibition. The adventurous life depicted in our Western stories appealed to him strongly. As for Gregg, after graduating from an English university, he had determined to learn farming, and curiously enough had spent three years on a Virginia farm with that end in view. When he returned to England, he said his relations used to sit around him in a great circle and request him to talk American. It used to decorously convulse them. Without, the shadows concealed small groups of our boys employed in their devious pursuits. It was a mongrel gathering of Nandi, Kavirondo, Elgayo, several Kamasia and a handful of gentry whose parentage was a dark mystery.

Suddenly the peace of the evening was abruptly shattered by horrible human cries of pain and rage. The brush became alive with crashing bodies. It was a moment startling—terrifying. Murder was being committed ten feet from our beds! It sounded as if human bodies were undergoing the refinement of devilish torture. My heart stopped beating.

"Damn those boys," exclaimed Flint, and without waiting to put on his shoes dashed into the bushes. Grabbing up a revolver—why, I'm unable to say, except it seemed the conventional thing to do—I followed him, a poor second, but in time to see him leap into the center of a tangled mass of black bodies. For an instant there was a confused scramble. Then, sharp hooks to the jaw laid two of the revolutionists out flat on the ground. There they rested with peaceful smiles on their childish faces, as though their dreams were pretty—Flint appeared to pack an anæsthetic in each fist. At this, the rest vanished into the shadows. The riot was over.

It seemed a miniature tribal war had broken out over the division of the meat with Kipsong, the Nandi, chief instigator. Now Flint stood in the center of a small patch of moonlight and ordered Kipsong to step forward. The song of the mosquitoes was his only answer. The bushes remained silent. Again and again, he uttered his command. At length, there was a movement in a patch of shadow, and Kipsong crept forth, cringing like a dog conscious of having misbehaved. Flint continued to order him forward with hypnotic reiter-

ation. After innumerable advances, and coy retreats, he stood up in front of Flint, and took the few cuffs meted out as punishment without a whimper.

It was a satisfactory anti-climax. By sheer force of personality, Flint had obliged the ring-leader to stand forward. Then, in full view of all the boys, he had chastised him like a naughty child. If he had failed, an insolent group of savages would have greeted us in the morning, intoxicated at the thought that they had bluffed the white men. They seemed to grow more obstreperous and wild the longer we stayed in this barbaric valley. And, as Flint stood there in the moonlight, he seemed so small, while in the shadows there seemed so many of them.

Daylight found us, for the last time, working the buffalo trails. The cloudless sky was already taking on the crystalline brilliancy of a new day. Flint and I were alone with half a dozen boys. The spoor was hot. At any moment the issue might be joined. Suddenly, I became conscious of a pungent aroma. It was strangely familiar. "Where have I smelled that perfume before?" my nose enquired, while I snapped my fingers to at-

tract the attention of Flint. My brain received the enquiry, and delivered the answer simultaneously: "In a circus tent." This seemed extraordinary, if not down-right foolish, but before I had time to have the message repeated a dry stick snapped. Then four grey shapes detached themselves from the bushes fifty yards to the left, and moved sluggishly away. With a thrill, I realized I was gazing at the backs of elephants; wild, in their native solitudes. Elephants that had never been subjected to the demoralizing effects of unlimited peanuts and pop-corn. We were in the middle of a herd. Instantly, buffalo were forgotten. Breathlessly, we awaited developments. We stood in a narrow game trail. Along it, in either direction, we could move, but beyond that our actions were restricted by the tangled growth that hemmed us in on either hand. Suddenly a hundred yards down the trail, in the direction from which we had just come, appeared an old bull elephant. With a lazy, rolling motion he approached, oblivious even to the beauty of the new-born day. The sun, now risen above the Kamasia Mountains, sparkled on his white tusks. On he came. The boys had vanished. With considerable anxiety, I watched Flint

for some indication of our next move. Again, the desire to run was well nigh irresistible, and controlled only by a strong effort. Fifty yards! Slowly he approached with stately tread, lifting his feet with ponderous rhythm. In three seconds, he would be on top of us! I wanted to utter a hysterical cry, and flatten myself into the shrubbery. Forty yards! Thirty! Twenty! He could have reached out and kissed us. Then Flint fired right into his face. Greatly relieved, I did likewise. Then we both ran. A moment later we looked back. The bull had turned like a flash, and was running away from us much faster than we had run away from him. In fact his strides were five and a half feet long. I measured them. I measured my own. They were not as long, but, nevertheless, strides I could be proud of. With his trunk in the air, he vanished, and with him his wives, or companions regardless of the nature of the relationship. Save for the snapping of the dry stick, and two shots, there had been no sound. All had transpired in profound silence. They had come like mice, as Gregg had said, and vanished like mist. Our boys, following the law of self-preservation, had climbed small trees about fifteen feet high. As they reached

the top, their weight bent the tips down until they hung suspended not more than three or four feet from the ground. They looked like over-ripe fruit, but seemed perfectly happy. They might have been mistaken for blackberries. Such was doubtless their hope.

"Now, isn't that hell," exclaimed Flint with disgust, "to carry tons of hard-nose ammunition around for days, and then forget it this morning? The pills we gave him will bother him about as much as if he'd been stung by a wasp with nervous debility."

"We should have given him the knee shot," I said. "I read in a book called 'Facts about Elephants' that when they're coming toward you like that, if you put a bullet in their knee-joint they just stand around helpless on three legs and look at you."

"Well, why didn't you do it?" he replied not too cheerfully.

"When I saw him coming down on top of us along that path, I couldn't even remember the name of the book," I answered.

We turned back toward the village. In the late afternoon we planned to climb half way up the Es-

carpment, and camp for the night. I now proceeded to concentrate into the short space of an hour some of the worst shooting that has ever been seen in Africa. From a veiled hint thrown off by Gregg I know this to be so. I missed a waterbuck, but hit a tree ten yards to the right. At ten feet, I missed a bush buck. Considerably discouraged, I shot at an impalla at a hundred yards. My bullet ricocheted five times before it bounced miles over the target. Then I missed a wart hog and a duiker. I was convinced now that the barrel of my rifle was badly bent.

"No wonder I can't hit them," I remarked. "You could shoot around a corner with it."

"Let Flint try it," said Gregg, who had joined us. "Maybe something stepped on it."

So Flint took it, and killed a partridge at one hundred and twenty-five yards by actual measurement. This was the unhappiest hour I spent in Africa. Our Elgayo trackers stood behind me and announced their disapproval of my shooting by violent staccato expectoration. This, in itself, was disconcerting enough to throw anyone's eye off. At length the whole business palled on them. With a final salvo, they gave me up

as hopeless and started digging for medicinal roots.

We paid off our local guides. Such things as we lacked ambition to carry home, like empty tins and bottles, we ceremoniously presented to them as parting gifts. They were received with jubilation. We said good-bye to this open air zoo and started slowly on our four thousand foot climb. Soon the village began to dwindle, the floor of the valley to contract. Then it gradually gathered into a vague continuous whole, its various familiar details indistinguishable. Already it was fading away like a dream. At an altitude of about twenty-five hundred feet a flat shelf of rock, twenty feet square, projected from the face of the Escarpment. Here we camped. In a cloudless sky the sun set. In a sky the color of steel, the full moon immediately rose. Below us, a small silvery spot, lay Lake Kamnarok, and a wriggly line that was the River Ndo. The flat-topped acacias, dotting the valley like miniature feather dusters, stood out in the brilliant moonlight with stereoptic distinctness. Faintly, from the unseen village, rose the sound of tom-toms and many voices singing. At times the wild chant

swelled into chords pathetically melodious, as though blurred visions of better things were stirring vague hopes in childish breasts. Then it would die away into an incoherent, disharmonious murmur. The voices of the women mingled with those of the men.

"What is it?" I asked.

"An ngoma—a sing-song," replied Flint. "They have one every full moon. It's a sort of 'beer night.' "

The evening advanced. Wilder grew the throbbing of the tom-toms, more savage and bacchantic the chorus. Toward morning, in a riot of intoxicated laughter and shrill hysterical screams, it mounted to a climax. Then silence. The pagan orgy was over. Faintly, in the distance, sounded the roar of a lion. From afar, the mocking wail of a hyena answered him. It rose on the still air like fiendish laughter. Save for the prowlers of the night, the valley slept.

XVIII

AT daylight we continued our climb. As we wound slowly up the steep track, I noticed a scar on Flint's leg above the knee, and remarked on it.

"It's a bullet wound," he said and pointed out the spots where the slug had made its entrance and exit. "I seem to offer a special attraction to idiots," he continued. "This boy 'monkey-up-a tree' with his bow and arrow was only one of many who appear to think I'm a cock-robin. During the War I was riding along a dry creek bed on a mule. Using its banks as cover, one of our men was stalking something—we lived on the land you know. He stuck his head up, saw me, and fired point blank. I waved my arms at the silly ass and yelled: 'Quit it.' He fired again. This time the bullet went through my leg. I galloped over to him. I was mad now, I can tell you. 'What do you think

you're doing?' I said. 'So sorry,' he answered, 'but I mistook you for an oryx.' You know what an oryx is?"

"Yes," I replied, "a large antelope with long rapier-like horns."

"Do I look like an oryx?" he enquired indignantly.

"Not from here," I said soothingly.

"Yes, and not from there either," he continued savagely. "I was never so mad in my life."

"What did you do?" I enquired, trying to visualize the horrid end of the near-sighted hunter.

"I told the idiot that if I was an oryx, he was a blue-nosed baboon," he concluded, "and he felt pretty cheap, I can tell you."

At the top of the Escarpment we paused for breakfast. There lay the valley, as we had first seen it far below us, peaceful and serene. I had entered it sprucely as a "tender foot," but was leaving it now, dilapidated and wise in the ways of death. Africa could afford no further surprises. The memory of its phantom buffalo, explosive rhino and silent elephant remains vivid to this moment. Its heat, and thirst, and carnal natives holding post-mortems over mountainous corpses, linger

as sensations and mental pictures that do not fade. On nights when the moon is full I can hear, in imagination, the chorus of the ngoma swelling up from its mysterious depths, answered mockingly by the wail of the hyena.

We cast a last look at the red flanks of the Kamasia Mountains, and turned into the dank forest known as Grogan's Concession. As we did so, Flint remarked: "Where is this place, Buffalo, you say you live in?"

And then a strange thing happened. For the life of me I couldn't explain it to him. I was amazed at myself. The geography of my native heath was growing dim. My head was full of names such as Beira, Chinde, Mombasa, Kijabi. They stood for reality. I thought of the day weeks before when, on the opposite side of the world, I had unrolled a map of Africa and laughed at the vagueness of these very names. Now, unreal, sounded the once familiar words Cheektowaga, Rochester, Niagara. From where we were they didn't seem to mean anything. I stopped long enough to fish a pocket atlas out of my haversack.

"Now I'll explain it to you," I told Flint.

But, after much thumbing, I found to my mor-

tification that a large juicy ant had been shut up in the book, and squeezed to death on the map of the State of New York. The whole western end of the State from Buffalo to Palmyra was buried under a licorice-colored blot. My world—the world I had known all my life, had been annihilated by an ant. What remained of the body seemed to lie in the bed of the Erie Canal, and extended from Tonawanda to Rome. I was dumfounded.

"I'm afraid I can't show it to you," I told Flint, "but it's in there somewhere," and I waggled the end of my finger around the region of the Great Lakes.

"Is it a nice town?" he enquired.

"Dandy," I answered, "when it isn't inundated with ant's blood."

On arriving at Rawson's, the monkeys began just where they left off on our departure. They continued to pick on Gregg. At lunch they sat above him on the rafters and pelted him with more unlovely missiles. They had become so expert that they could plunk a pebble into his tea-cup with never a miss. His annoyance reached such a pitch that he borrowed a donkey from Rawson, and set out for home without further delay.

"It isn't a friendly mule," said Rawson, as he ordered it saddled.

"Before I'd stay here another minute," replied Gregg coldly, "I'd ride Judas Iscariot piggy back from here to Beersheba."

Just as he was leaving, he stuck his head into the doorway of the dining-room and, glaring at the four disciples of Darwin, hissed: "Filthy beasts." They, on their part, curled back their lips in a nasty sneer and chattered. They nudged each other, and pointed. They followed him to the front door, and hurled derisive jeers at him as the hoof-beats of his mule faded into the distance.

We followed Gregg the next day. On parting, Rawson gave my son a lion skin. The monkeys wept real tears. It only shows that dumb animals know their friends. They stand ready to meet them half way any time. These monkeys were willing to go even farther than that. And so, Rawson's, at the edge of the forest known as Grogan's Concession, faded out of the picture.

The next four weeks were filled with a kaleidoscopic series of incidents and rapidly shifting backgrounds. With scarcely a pause at the farm,

we said "good-bye" to Gregg, and motored to the Nzoya River.

It was a parting quite worthy of this land where "good-byes" are frequent, and life is fast and furious.

"Well," I said. "We're off."

"Well," Gregg answered crisply. "Cheerio," and that was the last I ever saw of Gregg.

If we should chance to meet in the years to come, I know my greeting would consist of:

"Well, well. How are you?"

And of his reply I'm certain.—I can almost hear his voice uttering the words:

"Very fit. And you?" No matter where we met, we would resume where we left off as we stood that day within a stone's throw of the Equator.

Not far from Mount Elgan Flint had a small farm of three thousand acres on the Nzoya River. Here we hunted waterbuck for a week, ever nursing the hope that we might by chance stumble on a lion—the one ferocious animal we had yet to see.

It was a brief Odyssey full of daily sleuthings and bombardments. One afternoon there was a grass fire, which swept over the country to expire at the edge of fifty acres of ploughed land on which

Flint was fondly attempting to grow coffee. As the flames approached this protecting bulwark, we stood at its edge and watched the animals stampede across it to safety. One never knew what would appear next. All the oddities of the animal world, with and without legs, were in evidence. It resembled a parade of the beasts in Alice in Wonderland. Overhead, just above the flames, fluttered thousands of hawks feeding on the myriads of beetles and bugs forced into the air by the heat. There was no truce. Birds, bugs and beasts fled for their lives but, at the first opportunity, slew each other to make a meal.

Along both banks of the river ran a well-worn trail packed hard by the heavy tread of many hippopotami. Daily we posted a boy at a likely looking pool to watch for them, for Mrs. Leathers wanted hippo fat for soap. It seemed ridiculous that such a vast, independent animal should end up as a cake of soap. But if they were four-legged soap factories we were not to know them. Without doubt they had heard of our fell designs on their persons and left, their destinations unrevealed.

A mile from our camp was the farm of two young English Officers—"soldier settlers." They

had been in the War from the "retreat from Mons" and finished minus a number of things—principally cash. As a mark of gratitude the Government had sold them, and many others, beautiful farms under the Equator where they could live undisturbed, and listen to the lion's roar. These gentlemen were growing coffee trees, the golden berries of which may not be transmuted into bank notes in less than four years. At the end of the first year, they were officially informed that they had not planted the right brand. There was too much Mocha, or not enough Java in it. At any rate, it was no good—the public taste had condemned it—so out it came, postponing the golden flood for yet another year. There was so much coffee being planted in the Colony it would not have surprised one to hear the land was growing nervous. These military coffee planters thirsted to play bridge, so nightly we dined back and forth, sitting up until ten or eleven o'clock over feverish games. As our camp drew farther and farther away, they pursued us on donkeys, unwilling to yield, until there was much confusion in my mind as to whether I was participating in a shooting expedition or a bridge tournament.

For leopard we set huge spring traps, weighing

sixty or seventy pounds, baited with the choicest morsels of decomposed meat we could honestly come by, but they, as well as the hippo, ignored us.

Another event, always full of interest, was fording the river at frequent intervals. It was infested with crocodiles. As we waded across, a couple of boys would beat the water with sticks and shout at the top of their lungs. It seemed nothing less than an unpleasant advertisement of our intentions, but the crocs were held at bay. At times we would merely sit on a hill and watch the game below us in the scrub. A large volume might be written about a troop of baboons. Their lives resembled a six day bicycle race—just one thing after another. Their marital relations were fashioned after the pattern of a bloodthirsty Balkan war. Their old men were rascally and humorous.

Our daily business, however, was exploding powder. But, after working hard for a week, there were only three less waterbuck on Flint's farm. These animals seemed to thrive on bullets. Their vitality was amazing. One that I finally coaxed into giving in had received seventeen shots in what seemed vital parts of the body to me. If they did not drop on the first hit, each succeeding hit acted

on them like a cocktail. These experiences racked me greviously.

One, I got at dusk some distance from camp. It was dismembered by my two boys, and the meat hung in a tree for safety. At dawn, we returned for the steak and chops to discover two of the homeliest savages in Africa calmly packing it up into neat bundles. To them it appeared as a gift from the gods. Their spears were stuck in the ground within easy reach. The first act of my boys was to seize these weapons. It was their African method of getting the drop on their adversaries. The argument that ensued lasted for an hour. In the meantime, each boy was excitedly eating great "wogs" of the raw meat to sooth his nerves. The meat and argument were finished simultaneously, and we all parted on the best of terms. The bones we left for those that cared for bones. According to all rules of diplomacy "the incident was closed."

The days had wings. We were oblivious to time. When we estimated that ten days had passed, we returned to the farm. There we were informed by letter that a stateroom had been secured for us on a boat sailing for Marseilles via Suez the Twelfth of April. The gentleman at Nairobi, who was at-

tending to the matter, particularly stressed the magnitude of the favor that had been done us in securing this accommodation, for at this time of the year the whole African world was heading North, and reservations had to be made months in advance. But the news did not cause us to throw our caps into the air and cheer. On the contrary, we became cast down and morose. The thought of leaving this land of verdant breezes and scorching suns, of cosmic silences and outlandish hubbubs, gave us a morbid hour. The next day, however, a telegram arrived with the advice that the sailing had been postponed five days. The boat was loaded with rice for ports between Madagascar and Mombasa. It was raining in the South, and they were unable to remove the hatches. If the rice got wet, it would swell up and burst the vessel. This was better.

"That's silly," was my son's comment. "If that's so, why doesn't it happen when a person eats it?"

"The insides of a ship differ from those of a person," I pointed out to him. "You must learn to discriminate."

"It's the bunk," he said.

We found two of the homeliest savages in Africa packing our meat up into neat bundles.

"Maybe," I replied. "So Flint and I will motor to Nairobi and look into this rice story."

One brilliant morning we said "good-bye" to the Plateau, and made the now uneventful run of one hundred and eighty-six miles to Nairobi easily in a day. My son, we left at the farm to await developments.

"I'm beginning to feel like a wall-flower—I'm always being left," was his only comment. But I know he liked it.

I've parted from many places in the last few years, but never do I remember parting from any place with more regret than this Plateau Farm with its joyful inhabitants, and, as it vanished behind the Burnt Forest, I knew that my son and I had had an adventure together that, try as we might, could never be repeated.

As a gift of remembrance, I had purchased a cow from a neighbor and presented it to Mrs. Leathers with the single stipulation that she name it after me. And so, I hope it was; and I cherish the further hope that my namesake has done nothing since that day to tarnish the name that we both respond to.

The following day, at Nairobi, I called on the

Agent of the Massageries Maritime Steamship Line—a Frenchman and a wine merchant. It seemed that the rice was behaving so unreasonably that the sailing had now been postponed ten days.

"Zis riz—she is temperamental, like ze beau-uti-ful woman," he explained. He kept on explaining until, by the time he had done, I felt as if I'd been listening to the third act of Zaza with the "riz" as leading lady.

We wired for Mr. Leathers and my son to follow us to Nairobi with a few boys and lots of dogs. Three days later, they arrived. None of these boys had ever been near a railroad before, nor a large community of civilized people. As they stepped off the train at Nairobi, they were indeed a hostile looking band. The first act of the Reception Committee, consisting of the local police, was to lock up their gaudily striped buffalo-hide shields and spears in the checkroom of the station. I advised my son how badly "ze riz" was behaving, that we had a ten day reprieve and would employ the time on a short safari.

"That's the first time I ever heard of rice doing anybody any good," he said.

The next day we journeyed to Kijabi by train,

where we rented an ox-wagon from one Agate, and drifted down the Kedong Valley. Once again we passed the extinct volcanic cone of Longonot, with its steep sides carved into innumerable ravines by the waters of many rainy seasons, then on we creaked across a vast plain filled with grants, tommies, reed buck, eland, impalla, ostrich, hartebeeste and giraffe. Beneath an old volcano, named Suswa, we spent several days in a tin freight shed, raised on stilts to keep it from becoming engulfed in mud. It was a station known as "Quarantine," on the border of the Masai Reserve. Ox-wagons out-spanned here, to be pushed by hand across a dead line where inoculated oxen waited to trundle them on to Narok and the "fly" areas. It was a busy road for Africa. A couple of hunters, guns slung across their backs, might pedal lazily by on bicycles, followed by a straggling line of porters. Daily, an automobile or two rattled past, as a rule spouting steam like a geyser. Natives and ox-wagons constituted the rest of the traffic. One night an English Major dropped in, and made us all feel somewhat uncouth by having clean linen sheets on his camp bed. At supper time the room was so congested his boy started serving his dinner

on top of an old box. The Major regarded him with cold amazement: "Boy!" he said sternly, "where is my table? What do you mean serving dinner without a table? How can I eat without a table?" He had eaten off a table so long, even in Africa, food lost its significance unless it rested on the top of one. The balance of the evening the refrain of an old song kept running through my head. One verse went: "Must you have meat with your mustard? Can't you go without for once?" another—"Must you always have your trousers?", etc.

It is a very high class lyric. My intention at that moment was to compose a verse starting: "Must you always have a table?" But something interfered, and now it's too late.

We packed up and made a day's trip to the South, through a country which was waterless save for the puddles in the road. There we learned, at a Masai boma, that no game had been seen in that region for weeks. This boma was a large circle of huts connected by a fence of thorn bushes. Into it, the herds and flocks were driven at night. Flies swarmed here in numbers past belief, and it seemed as though every second man, woman and child were

blind. The eye-sockets of such were invisible under a dense black circle of flies, that remained undisturbed in spite of the fact the eyeless sufferers were armed with zebra-tail fly-switches. Experience had proved that, while one swarm might be chased away, another always hovered in the offing, anxiously awaiting its turn. So the original settlers were left in undisputed possession, and the agony of receiving a new and more ambitious host of boarders avoided.

At this boma, we tossed a coin and moved in another direction. At the foot of the valley wall, we left the wagon to climb the Escarpment in search of buffalo. In a series of grassy glades, overlooking miles of rugged peaks, we found them. This time, in the open, where to see them a man did not have to possess microscopic eyes. It was hunting on the top of the world. One that fell by our hands had a Wandorobo arrow-head buried two inches in the boss of its horn. How long it had carried this souvenir about we could not tell, but its disposition was of the vilest.

One camp we made at Rainbow's Water, a little pool in the rocks at the foot of the old volcano, Longonot. Fourteen miles away trains from Nai-

robi coasted down the great Escarpment, and rattled on to Victoria Lake, or, reversing the operation, struggled up the steep incline with apoplectic panting. The sides of the mountain were carved, as I have said, into a series of ravines and sharp ridges. With a Nandi tracker I followed one of these narrow shoulders up the mountain side, close on the heels of a herd of buffalo. We could almost feel their presence.

I motioned the Nandi up the only tree at hand to act as look-out. As soon as his vision became unobstructed, he made excited signs indicating "dozens of buffalo." Then something frightened them, and they stampeded down on top of us. To the right of us, and left of us, they passed, flattening the bushes and shaking the ground with the thunder of their hoof-beats. In the shadow of a bush ten feet away, a cow paused, nose to the ground, to stare at me for an instant with horrible eyes. Great strings of foam hung from her mouth. Then, with a snort of rage, she was off. The idea of shooting had never entered my head. Those rolling red eyes with the whites showing had hypnotized me. Suddenly there was silence. The herd had paused to listen. The ridge we were on

was twenty yards across and dropped thirty feet on either hand to the ravine below. The Nandi slid down the tree. Cautiously, we crept after them. There, in the shadows, were some dark blotches. I fired four times into the obscurity. Once more the bushes became alive. In a body the herd turned to the edge of the ridge. The nearest buffalo launched himself into space, dropped twenty-five feet to the soft earth at the bottom of the ravine, and an instant later was scrambling up the steep bank of the next ridge. One after another the herd followed him in this acrobatic leap —bulls, cows, yearlings and calves. There were forty of them.

In the direction of Kijabi a white plume of smoke rose into the still air. The down train to Nairobi was just pulling out. Civilization was beginning to wind its tentacles around us.

The next morning we returned to the ox-wagon. The boy we had left in charge was in a very disturbed state of mind. The previous night, as he slept beside the fire with a small black dog as his only companion, a leopard had stalked them, and carried off the dog. Vividly he described the cries of the little animal as it disappeared in the dark-

ness gripped in the relentless jaws. The rest of the night he had spent in a tree.

"It's against the law, but we'll set a gun trap," said Flint.

The balance of the day we spent in constructing, about two hundred yards from our camp, a small circular enclosure of thorns with a narrow opening over which a rifle was secured, muzzle downward. A string attached to the trigger was arranged in such a way that any animal pushing into the enclosure would discharge the gun and receive the bullet in the back of the neck. Part of a very ripe carcass was placed within. At nine o'clock we retired. At nine-fifteen the gun went off. Clad in pajamas, the way lighted by a candle lantern, we approached the trap. There, lying on its stomach with its head between its paws, as though asleep, was a leopard. In the light of the lantern, its spots stood out like jet on a background of yellow velvet. A beam of candle light illuminated its eyes. They were round, opalescent balls of fire, embracing us in a stare so venomous and baleful as to make one shudder. The next moment it would surely spring. This was too much for me.

"Good God!" I cried, "it's alive," and fell over

Leathers, who carried the lantern. The lantern crashed to earth, flickered an instant and—went out. The next three minutes were chaos. When the boys arrived, years later it seemed, with a couple of fresh lanterns, I found myself hugging Leathers' grizzled form in a manner that it mortifies me to think of even now. My son was slowly strangling me to death. From the bottom of the heap, Flint in a feeble voice was calling for air. The leopard hadn't moved.

"It must be dead, after all," I said with a meaningless laugh, as we rearranged our disheveled night-robes, "but that light in its eyes—where did it come from?"

"It had been dead just about a minute when we flashed the light on it," said Flint. "Its eyes hadn't had time to grow stony. But haven't you been down here long enough to leave off doing things like that? You've gotten into the habit of starting a panic a day. Now you've ruined a perfectly good pair of pajamas for me. It's a bit thick."

The trap was reset, and the leopard placed in a tree near the fire till morning. At five A. M. the gun went off again. This time the victim of its

solitary vigil was a hyena,—only a no-account hyena. After breakfast the boys skinned the leopard. In its stomach were the remains of the little black dog almost intact. They were interred with honors.

Late afternoon saw us straggling into Kijabi. Our African adventure was over. At an Indian Duka I purchased some hatchets and presented them to the boys as a parting gift. They seemed as pleased as children—all but one, in whose sad eyes two large tears formed and trickled down his cheeks.

"What is his trouble?" I enquired.

"He says 'he expected a sword,' " replied Flint disgustedly.

"I can't stand this—I'll give him a sword," I exclaimed.

"On the contrary," said Flint. "I'll give him a kick." This he did, and followed it with another, and another, until the boy so far remembered his manner as to thank me for the hatchet, and withdraw, racked by sobs of regret for the sword which he was never to receive.

Then dogs, boys and Leathers, in a conglomerate mess, boarded a freight train and clattered north-

wards. Until it was hidden by a shoulder of Kijabi Mountain, we stood and waved. At length, they too had vanished into their African background. We dragged our despondent bodies to the station tea-room, where even four cups of concentrated lye failed to dissipate our gloom.

That night we dined at Nairobi. Flint had accompanied us thither to see us off the following day. The evening, we spent reminiscing and packing.

"I've only one regret," Flint remarked. "You didn't get a lion."

"Another time," I told him, "for some day we are coming back."

In the morning, dressed in very wrinkled, storish-looking clothes, we went to take up our steamer tickets. Then we were staggered by the news that the sailing had been deferred still another week. "She is ze most naughty riz zis company evar handle," said the Agent. "I go distract. I go crazee."

"That's all right with me," said my son. And we drifted out to hold a council of war on the sidewalk.

XIX

"IT'S easier to break into this country than it is to break out of it," I remarked. "What can we possibly do to kill a week?"

"Try and get a lion," Flint replied.

It seemed an amazing idea, but that afternoon found us motoring to Mechaka, thirty-five miles South of Nairobi, in quest of lion. The Athi Plains were crossed, the stony Athi River forded, and we continued on along the edge of the vast Kapiti Plains. We passed, at length, a small rocky hill rising a hundred feet or so from the level of the veldt.

"That's Wami," said Flint. "If there are any lion in the neighborhood, they'll be on Wami. A man named Stub owns it."

In all directions, as far as the eye could see, browsing herds of game dotted the plain. We turned toward the hills, passing several orange groves, and stopped before a half-finished mud

house. A nervous, muscular individual appeared in the doorway. "This is Stub," said Flint. "I say, Stub," he continued, "are there any lion on Wami?"

"Three," replied Stub promptly. "A boy just reported them."

"How about terms?" said Flint. They withdrew and held an animated conversation.

Then Flint turned to me. "This is a frightfully mercenary proposition," he reported, "but it's Stub's livelihood at present. If you want to see a lion, here it is. He'll let us kill one lion on Wami for thirteen pounds, or two for twenty-five."

"I'll take two," I said.

"Don't move so fast," he retorted. "We've got to get 'em first. The proposition is, no lion—no money."

"That's all right," he added. "I'll take them on the hoof—live weight. It only figures about sixpence a pound. That's cheap for lion—and I want to see everything. Our friend should stud the roads with signs reading 'Stub for lions—Sixpence the pound—Fresh daily.' He doesn't realize the value of a little intelligent advertising."

It seemed an extraordinary proceeding—this

trafficking in lion. That such a thing was possible had never occurred to me.

To my amazement, however, dawn of the following morning saw us comfortably ensconced behind a pile of rocks on the summit of Wami, known as the "pulpit," while twenty boys beat its slopes. The relics of many other intrepid hunters were clearly visible behind our volcanic barricade. I began to feel ridiculous. It seemed a sacrilegious perversion of the ethics of hunting.

"This is a little too much," I remarked.

"If a rabbit breaks cover and charges us, we can always scream for help!" my son volunteered.

Fortunately, however, we were saved the mortification of killing an unsuspecting lion from behind impregnable breastworks. As the sun climbed, I developed a tropical thirst that, in company with the white orb that had given it birth, mounted higher and higher. At last it became unbearable, and I left the rock pile to get a drink from a pool of rain water. As I sprawled awkwardly on my hands and knees, lapping up the tepid water, the lion arrived. There could have been no hypnotic appeal in my position for, after one look, it gave three very horrid growls, veered sharply to the left and disappeared.

Soon Stub approached with the beaters, not a little annoyed at the thought that my drink of water had cost him thirteen pounds.

"They're still on Wami, anyway," he growled.

"Don't do that," I interrupted him. "It reminds me of the lion."

"The way some people treat lion," he retorted, "you'd think they were as thick as gooseberries around here. Now, we'll have to track 'em down." Then, he turned to Flint and enquired in an undertone,—"What kind of a shot is your sport? I'm not keen to get balled up with a lion out in the open, if he's the kind that gets paralysis in tight places. I'm about fed up with this business. Only last week I had one of those women huntresses out here. Oh, no! She wasn't afraid of nothing! To her, lion were about as dangerous as ticks. I got her up on one. She got the palsy. It charged. She dropped her gun. She threw her arms around my neck and started to strangle me to death. A boy next us ran for a tree and drew off the lion. If he hadn't, we would have both got it in the neck. I'm fairly fed up with this business."

"You needn't worry about my man," said Flint, with a boastful laugh. "He's accustomed to shoot-

ing humming birds with a rifle." This was amusing pleasantry, but put me in an embarrassing position.

We picked up the huge tracks, cautiously following their tortuous windings in and out among the rocks and scrub, careful always to pass a clump of bushes on the uphill side, never moving into a patch of brush without first throwing out skirmishers in the form of a stone or two. The afternoon wore on. Our quest seemed hopeless. At length, Stub pointed to the crest of the hill, and remarked: "Well, if there aren't any lion, there's a Chandler's reed buck. Let's see you get him."

"Show him what you can do," whispered Flint, with a wicked grin.

Although it was about three hundred yards away, and I had only the haziest idea of its exact location, I uttered a short prayer and fired. "God, you got him!" exclaimed Stub with amazement. "That's some shooting." For my part, I was dumbfounded. It seemed as though unseen forces must have guided that bullet.

Soon after we found ourselves at the foot of the hill. Far out on the plain a herd of eland was browsing. "That bull behind the rest is a good one," said Stub regarding it through his glasses.

"Why don't you take him?" He spoke with confidence now, as though "taking him" was a matter that rested entirely between me and my rifle.

"How far is he?" I asked.

"About six hundred yards," he replied.

I stabbed the air with the rifle a couple of times, and fired. Down went the eland. It was incredible. Yet there he lay. Once in a blue moon things like that happen I suppose.

"God, you got him too!" Stub exclaimed. "Lion will be child's play for you."

"It's nothing to what he can do," said Flint solemnly. Had Lady Luck, in her most fickle mood, ever placed a man in a more awkward position?

The afternoon drew to a close. We were scuffling aimlessly along the hillside. Suddenly Stub uttered a maniacal yell—"There they are!" Pandemonium broke loose. My son and I were thrust forward. Behind us, Flint and Stub seemed to have completely lost their senses. Diabolical yells and wild profanity split the air. The sight of the lion transformed them into primeval savages. As for myself, I could see nothing.

"For God's sake shoot—she's coming," yelled Stub.

Then a tawny something moved, and I saw them. —To my horror, seventy yards below us on the hillside, stood—not one, but four, lion; a male, a female and two half-grown cubs. The lion regarded us calmly, behind him the young ones moved restlessly to and fro. The lioness crouched broadside to us, her head turned in our direction, her tail switching sinuously from side to side with sinister grace. The look in her eyes haunts me yet. They were as big as saucers, saucers of molten gold, flecked with spots of jade. They fixed us with a stare of such baleful intensity my blood turned to ice. For a long moment my heart stopped beating, then began to leap with such violent rapidity as to echo in my ears like the beating of a drum.

"Shoot. Do you want to get us all killed?" Stub stuck his face into mine. There was foam on his lips. It sounds like a melodramatic touch, but I distinctly remember thinking at the moment: "I wish he wouldn't foam at the mouth."

I fired at the lioness, in accordance with the accepted practice. "Female first—lion afterward" had been drilled into me until it was a by-word. And, under the circumstances, I felt no embarrassment in the fact that I missed her or, what was

worse, merely inflicted a slight flesh wound in the chest. Stub uttered a howl of despair. Then she charged, darting up the hill toward us like a streak of yellow lightning. My son opened fire. On she came for twenty-five yards with incredible swiftness. Then, the grade proved too much for her wind and, suddenly swerving, she bounded into a small clump of bushes two hundred yards away on our right. Immediately a yelping pack of small dogs belonging to Stub surrounded her. Half a minute later we were there. She crouched in the middle of the bush, defending herself with feline deftness from the assaults of the dogs. Again and again they charged, only to retreat in confusion when she lunged at them. As we came up, she turned and made two rapid feints at us, hissing the while like a house cat cornered by a terrier. I pushed my rifle into her face, and fired. The bullet entered her eye. Without a sound she collapsed. As this occurred, the distance between us was just nine feet. We turned instantly for a shot at the others—but, during the confusion, they had disappeared. No sooner had the male seen his consort join in the unequal battle than he slipped unostentatiously away, followed by the two cubs.

He seemed but a scurvy knave—a cowardly paltroon masquerading under the false title, King of Beasts—and one could not regard the massive body of the lioness, lying limp and contorted in death, without being conscious of a twinge of pity.

"After the shooting I saw you do this afternoon, you should of got them both," said Stub ruefully.

"I'm never at my best when cheered on by a lot of lunatics," I replied with dignity. As a rifle shot, I will always remain an enigma to Stub, I'm afraid.

Our lion hunt was over. That night we camped on the edge of the Kapiti Plains. For two days we shot around Wami. We, hoping for another lion, —Stub, for thirteen pounds. Daily, as we stepped from our tent, we became covered with the ticks, which swarmed on every blade of grass. It was futile to remove them until night when we returned to camp. Then we scraped them off with a table knife. For weeks afterward we were not entirely free from them. Every now and again, in Paris or London, one would appear from an odd corner and, as we consigned him to the flames, the roar of traffic rising muffled from the street below, we saw again the Kapiti Plains stretching away into

Mizpah I

the distance dotted with herds of browsing game.

We had shot so many buck and antelope by now, our feet were ready to turn to hooves and our heads sprout horns. But, even yet, we lacked a good impalla. So, still waiting for the boat, we picked up a scratch lot of boys at Nairobi, herded them onto a freight train, and set out for Makindu, two hundred and eleven miles from the coast. At Mile 298, in a rocky patch near Wami, we passed three lion wandering about disconsolately within fifty yards of the track. It was raining in sheets, for the great rains were upon us. They were drenched to the skin, and three more woeful, water-logged looking beasts would be hard to picture. The Guard, reacting as tradition demanded, ceased to be a mere railroad man and became as one of our arboreal ancestors in the clutches of the hunting frenzy. He was for stopping the train and giving battle but, as is ever the case in such circumstances, our guns had preceded us by the morning train.

"There's thirty-eight pounds worth of lion," I remarked to Flint. "I hope, for Stub's sake, they have the good taste to spend a few days on Wami drying out."

Night fell, blotting out the plains; and, thus, the curtain dropped for us on Nairobi nestling on its high upland plateau.

The next morning we set out from Makindu in the direction of the Bura Hills, and camped about five miles from the station. The ground was a mire. Thirty inches of rain had fallen during the month of April. Mosquitoes swarmed. The old piece of canvas that served as our tent leaked fully as much as its porous condition suggested it might, but the lure of Africa held us fascinated. We would not have exchanged places with a king.

Our camp was on the edge of a small patch of sugar cane, cultivated by a lonely Indian. Daily he squatted in a hole and fed the stalks into a crusher, the driving power for which was supplied by a blindfolded bullock, yoked to a long lever. Round and round it splashed in the mud with infinite patience; its hours of labor reaching like those of the old darky from "Caint see to Caint see." The juice, and many strange odds and ends, were caught in a Standard Oil tin to be boiled down to a yellow sugar, the native name of which I could never remember.—I knew just as much Swahili

now as when we had made our first timorous entrance into the Custom House at Mombasa. Here we hunted impalla, oryx and water buck, while, from high above the tree tops, the round soft eyes of giraffe regarded us quizzically. We followed the fresh tracks of rhino, crossing pools of water still muddy from their passing. On every hand dik dik darted to and fro, as plentiful as rabbits, and not much larger, but perfect little antelope from horn to hoof.

At length, we returned to Makindu to learn that even yet our ill-fated steamer was delayed far to the South. We packed up our trifles, and rode a freight train to Simba, one station to the North. "There's a lot of lion there," said Flint.

Simba consisted of a small tin station, in charge of a Babu, and a couple of watering troughs,—yet, to us, it was full of enchantment. In a tiny room, reserved for that purpose, we took up our quarters. A tree outside our window served as a pleasant harbor for a colony of weaver birds, their strange pear-shaped nests hanging from its branches like clusters of fantastic fruit. Daily, their goings and comings, bickerings, and full-throated enthusiasm kept us awake, for we slept

by day now, squandering the hours of darkness sitting up for lion.

The first day we were rudely dispossessed by a swarm of bees, after a battle waged with more courage than intelligence. Flint was the stubborn defender of the theory that possession means everything. He was stung thirty-six times. By means of a piece of paper and a pencil we took an accurate census of his lumps. We smoked the room out, plugged up each crack and cranny, and thenceforth enjoyed luxurious indolence.

One night we walked a mile up the track to the "funk hole" of Simba Bele, an Indian section foreman, the slayer of many lion,—as his pseudonym meaning "many lion" proclaimed to the world. We spent the night in this hole in the ground roofed over with sod and, though lion were on all sides of us, filling the night with their mighty roars, they refused the invitation held out to them by our bait. "It's not ripe enough," complained Flint.

At last, late one afternoon, as we were setting out on our nocturnal quest, a telegram came. Our steamer was approaching Kilidini Harbor. In the morning we would board the down train and turn our faces definitely toward the coast.

This was the end indeed. I ordered Abdallah to pack. Though just as poor as the day we had hired him, he had continued to stay honest through thick and thin—faithful to the last. My personal effects had been the subject of profound research on his part. So now, I suggested that out of his intimate knowledge he choose from them something in the nature of a parting gift. He gave the matter deep consideration and, with unerring taste, decided on three rather flamboyant shirts. So three rather flamboyant shirts are missing from my wardrobe, but their absence only serves to remind me from time to time of Abdallah—the Elegant One.

I took a short walk along the Athi River. It was in flood. Overhead a troop of monkeys watched me narrowly. A stone's throw away, on the opposite bank, some zebra and wildebeeste grazed without concern, the setting sun illuminating their sleek bodies with shafts of yellow light. A repulsive hyena thrust his head from a bush, regarded the dying day with a blood-shot eye, then trotted away. An instant later, from around a bend in the river, came pitiful shrill cries. I peered through the bushes just in time to witness the end of some small furry animal in the hyena's jaws. Then, I fired my

last shot in Africa. The hyena, head to the ground, lurched grotesquely round and round in a circle, balanced for a brief moment on the edge of the bank, and plunged into the yellow waters of the Athi River.

This night we sat on a platform in the top of an acacia tree. The moon was full again. Far away on the sky line the great snow cap of Kilimanjaro floated in the heavens like a silvery island. About us, the world was flooded with a soft white effulgence. The air was balmy and charged with cool caresses. Suddenly, the night became vocal. Death stalked abroad. The World of Beasts became vibrant; galvanized into pulsating life. Hour after hour, five hundred yards from our acacia, four lion kept the pallid night alive with their reverberations.

"I feel like a thief," I whispered to Flint. "I'm taking something away from this country I never brought into it—Romance."

"Well, help yourself freely," he whispered back. "We'll never miss it."

The next thing I knew he was nudging me. It was daylight. Kilimanjaro now reared its crest into a sky tinged with mother-of-pearl, its snow

fields suffused with faint pinks. I shook my son. "Wake up," I said. "Our adventure is over!"

"Chi, thank God!" exclaimed Flint, with a smothered yawn. There, approaching through the dewy grass, filed the boys with our morning tea.

IV

WHAT OF IT?

WHAT OF IT?

I

IT had been an uneventful crossing. Everybody had said so at least once—many, two or three times. As we cut across the lower corner of the Grand Banks, a lady remarked: "I don't see why those fishing boats aren't being continually run down." We passed the Nantucket Light Ship. "What can those men possibly do to pass the time?" queried the most popular girl on board. Ambrose Light was left behind. "I hope nobody ever names a lighthouse after me," exclaimed a gentleman just completing his thirty-sixth crossing. I agreed. His name was unpronounceable. We entered the narrow channel. "Just over there the Leviathan ran on that submerged sewer and broke it," announced a man at my elbow. "What the Government wants to monkey around with that big lemon for is beyond me." It was beyond me, too. We slipped through

quarantine with flying colors. There was not a single case of delirium tremens on board. The historic goddess stood on our left. "The land of the free and the home of the boot-legger," chanted a party with a nose like a patent leather rose petal. "Thank God, you didn't fail me," I murmured. We looked down on a dock filled with white circles that were faces. A man at the rail uttered a loud cry. "There's Abie—little Abie. Hello, Abie! Abie! Here I am!" and he flapped his arms awkwardly like wings.

We stood on the dock. It was an eccentric dock. It rose and fell with a gentle heaving motion. As we watched every move made by the Custom Inspector without appearing to do so we swayed to and fro in harmony with it. We were home! Yet, speaking for myself, I felt like a criminal. Many of the other passengers, as they unlocked their trunks, looked like yeggs. They were evidently attempting to conceal the fact that they possessed long police records. One of my bags was lost. It wasn't there. It had gone. I mentioned this to a man. His person was heavily inlaid with gold braid. He looked at me kindly, and said: "That's all right, sweetheart, it'll turn up in a week or so."

In the middle of his face there was a fourteen carat tooth. It served as a rallying point for features which otherwise wouldn't have understood what was expected of them. His personality was convincing, and smelled faintly of bay-rum. I thought he knew about the bag. Maybe he did. I never saw it again. Now, whenever I catch the faint aroma of bay-rum I think of my bag. There were four bottles of kümmel in it.

I started to cross Fifth Avenue. My mind was full of white coral beaches fringed with tousled palm fronds, and echoing to the pounding surf of azure seas. I saw wart hogs in death struggles with fighting dogs. I could feel Colobus monkeys trying to get into bed with me. I heard the roar of a lion, followed by a deathlike stillness, a hyena's wail, natives singing in the light of the full moon barbaric chords full of sad melody. Before my eyes the snow-cap of Kilimanjaro floated in an opalescent dawn. Then, distinctly, came the explosive snort of a rhino. A voice remarked sarcastically: "What-and-the-hell do you think you're doing —sleep walking?" Where was I? Oh, yes. I had just started to cross Fifth Avenue.

Our train passed a packing plant with a national

reputation. Then, some monumental grain elevators obscured the whole horizon. I was home!

I had been away a year. I approached the table at which I had always lunched. A dozen men sat around it talking. Most of them ate crackers and milk. It was all just as I'd left it, except they were experimenting with a new brand of crackers. I half-expected to be greeted like a returning prodigal. I paused. Nobody saw me. I sat down. Then a man finished. I knew he had finished, because he threw his napkin under the table. His glance fell on me for an instant. He got up to leave. "Hello!" he said. "Been away?"

Str. of Gibraltar
Algiers
Tunis
Madeira
Bound in Morocco
by Arthur Train
Local color by Edith Wharton
Fez
Atlas Mts
Garden of Allah
Robert Hichens
Teneriffe
Canaries
N
NE
E
SE
S
SW
W
NW
Sand Storm
Sahara
Sand, Sorrow & Sore
Timbuktu
Col Alex Powell's
East frontier
C. Verde Is.
Pierre Loti's Playground
Liberia
Prof Garner
learning
Monkey talk
Equator
Ivory coast
Much Silver flying fish
To New York
Gulf of Guinea
Supposed Home of Tarzan
America
Pernambuco
(who cares)
River Congo
Discovered by May Irwin
1907
Katanga
Diamonds
Portuguese
East
(Mud, Morons & Monotony)
very rough here
Kalahari
Desert
St. Helena
Wreck of the
"Medea"
Orange R.
Dolphins
Cape of Good Hope

Author's Sketch Map

Dotted line shows route